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WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

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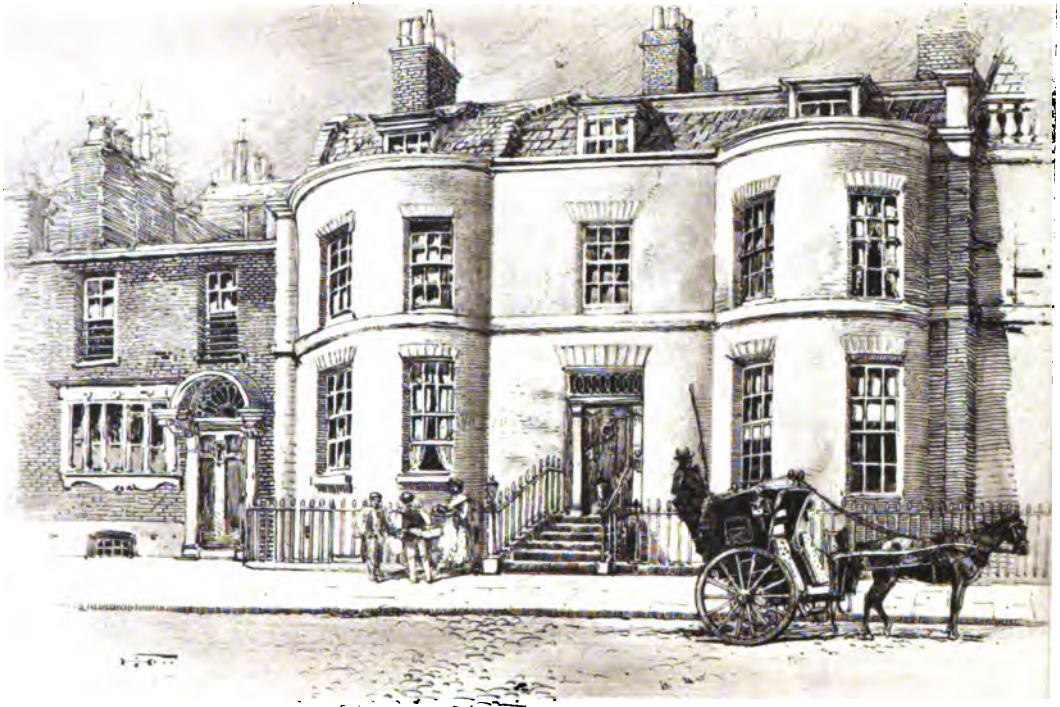

VANITY FAIR

A NOVEL WITHOUT A HERO

BY

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

WITH THE AUTHOR'S ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME II

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1903

Home of No. 13 Young Street, where "Vanity Fair" was written

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For the Kensington Edition from a sketch by Eyre Crowe, A. R. A.

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VANITY FAIR

A NOVEL WITHOUT A HERO

CHAPTER XXV

IN WHICH ALL THE PRINCIPAL PERSONAGES THINK FIT TO LEAVE BRIGHTON

CONDUCTED to the ladies, at the Ship Inn, Dobbin assumed a jovial and rattling manner, which proved that this young officer was becoming a more consummate hypocrite every day of his life. He was trying to hide his own private feelings, first upon seeing Mrs. George Osborne in her new condition, and secondly to mask the apprehensions he entertained as to the effect which the dismal news brought down by him would certainly have upon her.

"It is my opinion, George," he said, "that the French Emperor will be upon us, horse and foot, before three weeks are over, and will give the Duke such a dance as shall make the Peninsula appear mere child's play. But you need not say that to Mrs. Osborne, you know. There mayn't be any fighting on our side after all, and our business in Belgium may turn out to be a mere mili-

tary occupation. Many persons think so; and Brussels is full of fine people and ladies of fashion." So it was agreed to represent the duty of the British army in Belgium in this harmless light to Amelia.

This plot being arranged, the hypocritical Dobbin saluted Mrs. George Osborne quite gaily, tried to pay her one or two compliments relative to her new position as a bride (which compliments, it must be confessed, were exceedingly clumsy and hung fire wofully), and then fell to talking about Brighton, and the sea-air, and the gaieties of the place, and the beauties of the road and the merits of the "Lightning" coach and horses,—all in a manner quite incomprehensible to Amelia, and very amusing to Rebecca, who was watching the Captain, as indeed she watched every one near whom she came.

Little Amelia, it must be owned, had rather a mean opinion of her husband's friend, Captain Dobbin. He lisped—he was very plain and homely-looking: and exceedingly awkward and ungainly. She liked him for his attachment to her husband (to be sure there was very little merit in that), and she thought George was most generous and kind in extending his friendship to his brother officer. George had mimicked Dobbin's lisp and queer manners many times to her, though to do him justice, he always spoke most highly of his friend's good qualities. In her little day of triumph, and not knowing him intimately as yet, she made light of honest William—and he knew her opinions of him quite well, and acquiesced in them very humbly. A time came when she knew him better, and changed her notions regarding him; but that was distant as yet.

As for Rebecca, Captain Dobbin had not been two hours in the ladies' company before she understood his

secret perfectly. She did not like him, and feared him privately; nor was he very much prepossessed in her favour. He was so honest, that her arts and cajoleries did not affect him, and he shrank from her with instinctive repulsion. And, as she was by no means so far superior to her sex as to be above jealousy, she disliked him the more for his adoration of Amelia. Nevertheless, she was very respectful and cordial in her manner towards him. A friend to the Osbornes! a friend to her dearest benefactors! She vowed she should always love him sincerely: she remembered him quite well on the Vauxhall night, as she told Amelia archly, and she made a little fun of him when the two ladies went to dress for dinner. Rawdon Crawley paid scarcely any attention to Dobbin, looking upon him as a good-natured nincompoop and under-bred City man. Jos patronised him with much dignity.

When George and Dobbin were alone in the latter's room, to which George had followed him, Dobbin took from his desk the letter which he had been charged by Mr. Osborne to deliver to his son. "It's not in my father's hand-writing," said George, looking rather alarmed; nor was it: the letter was from Mr. Osborne's lawyer, and to the following effect:—

"Bedford Row, *May* 7, 1815.

"Sir,

"I am commissioned by Mr. Osborne to inform you, that he abides by the determination which he before expressed to you, and that in consequence of the marriage which you have been pleased to contract, he ceases to consider you henceforth as a member of his family. This determination is final and irrevocable.

"Although the monies expended upon you in your minority, and the bills which you have drawn upon him so unsparingly of

late years, far exceed in amount the sum to which you are entitled in your own right (being the third part of the fortune of your mother, the late Mrs. Osborne, and which reverted to you at her decease, and to Miss Jane Osborne and Miss Maria Frances Osborne); yet I am instructed by Mr. Osborne to say, that he waives all claim upon your estate, and that the sum of 2,000*l.*, 4 per cent. annuities, at the value of the day (being your one-third share of the sum of 6,000*l.*), shall be paid over to yourself or your agents upon your receipt for the same, by

"Your obedient Servt.,

"S. Higgs.

"P. S.—Mr. Osborne desires me to say, once for all, that he declines to receive any messages, letters, or communications from you on this or any other subject."

"A pretty way you have managed the affair," said George, looking savagely at William Dobbin. "Look there, Dobbin," and he flung over to the latter his parent's letter. "A beggar, by Jove, and all in consequence of my d—d sentimentality. Why couldn't we have waited? A ball might have done for me in the course of the war, and may still, and how will Emmy be bettered by being left a beggar's widow? It was all your doing. You were never easy until you had got me married and ruined. What the deuce am I to do with two thousand pounds? Such a sum won't last two years. I've lost a hundred and forty to Crawley at cards and billiards since I've been down here. A pretty manager of a man's matters *you* are, forsooth."

"There's no denying that the position is a hard one," Dobbin replied, after reading over the letter with a blank countenance; "and as you say, it is partly of my making. There are some men that wouldn't mind

changing with you," he added, with a bitter smile. "How many captains in the regiment have two thousand pounds to the fore, think you? You must live on your pay till your father relents, and if you die, you leave your wife a hundred a year."

"Do you suppose a man of my habits can live on his pay and a hundred a year?" George cried out in great anger. "You must be a fool to talk so, Dobbin. How the deuce am I to keep up my position in the world upon such a pitiful pittance? I can't change my habits. I *must* have my comforts. *I* wasn't brought up on porridge, like MacWhirter, or on potatoes, like old O'Dowd. Do you expect my wife to take in soldiers' washing, or ride after the regiment in a baggage waggon?"

"Well, well," said Dobbin, still good-naturedly, "we'll get her a better conveyance. But try and remember that you are only a dethroned prince now, George, my boy; and be quiet whilst the tempest lasts. It won't be for long. Let your name be mentioned in the *Gazette,* and I'll engage the old father relents towards you."

"Mentioned in the *Gazette!*" George answered. "And in what part of it? Among the killed and wounded returns, and at the top of the list, very likely!"

"Psha! It will be time enough to cry out when we are hurt," Dobbin said. "And if anything happens, you know, George, I have got a little, and I am not a marrying man, and I shall not forget my godson in my will," he added, with a smile. Whereupon the dispute ended—as many scores of such conversations between Osborne and his friend had concluded previously—by the former declaring there was no possibility of being

angry with Dobbin long, and forgiving him very generously after abusing him without cause.

"I say, Becky," cried Rawdon Crawley out of his dressing-room, to his lady, who was attiring herself for dinner in her own chamber.

"What?" said Becky's shrill voice. She was looking over her shoulder in the glass. She had put on the neatest and freshest white frock imaginable, and with bare shoulders and a little necklace, and a light blue sash, she looked the image of youthful innocence and girlish happiness.

"I say, what'll Mrs. O. do, when O. goes out with the regiment?" Crawley said, coming into the room, performing a duet on his head with two huge hair-brushes, and looking out from under his hair with admiration on his pretty little wife.

"I suppose she'll cry her eyes out," Becky answered. "She has been whimpering half-a-dozen times, at the very notion of it, already to me."

"*You* don't care, I suppose?" Rawdon said, half angry at his wife's want of feeling.

"You wretch! don't you know that I intend to go with you," Becky replied. "Besides, you're different. You go as General Tufto's aide-de-camp. *We* don't belong to the line," Mrs. Crawley said, throwing up her head with an air that so enchanted her husband that he stooped down and kissed it.

"Rawdon dear—don't you think—you'd better get that—money from Cupid, before he goes?" Becky continued, fixing on a killing bow. She called George Osborne, Cupid. She had flattered him about his good looks a score of times already. She watched over him kindly at écarté of a night when he would

drop in to Rawdon's quarters for a half-hour before bed-time.

She had often called him a horrid dissipated wretch, and threatened to tell Emmy of his wicked ways and

naughty extravagant habits. She brought his cigar and lighted it for him; she knew the effect of that manœuvre, having practised it in former days upon Rawdon Crawley. He thought her gay, brisk, arch, distinguée, delightful. In their little drives and dinners, Becky, of course, quite outshone poor Emmy, who remained very mute and timid while Mrs. Crawley and her husband rattled away together, and Captain Crawley (and Jos

after he joined the young married people) gobbled in silence.

Emmy's mind somehow misgave her about her friend. Rebecca's wit, spirits, and accomplishments troubled her with a rueful disquiet. They were only a week married, and here was George already suffering ennui, and eager for others' society! She trembled for the future. How shall I be a companion for him, she thought,—so clever and so brilliant, and I such a humble foolish creature? How noble it was of him to marry me—to give up everything and stoop down to me! I ought to have refused him, only I had not the heart. I ought to have stopped at home and taken care of poor papa. And her neglect of her parents (and indeed there was some foundation for this charge which the poor child's uneasy conscience brought against her) was now remembered for the first time, and caused her to blush with humiliation. Oh! thought she, I have been very wicked and selfish—selfish in forgetting them in their sorrows —selfish in forcing George to marry me. I know I'm not worthy of him—I know he would have been happy without me—and yet—I tried, I tried to give him up.

It is hard when, before seven days of marriage are over, such thoughts and confessions as these force themselves on a little bride's mind. But so it was, and the night before Dobbin came to join these young people—on a fine brilliant moonlight night of May—so warm and balmy that the windows were flung open to the balcony, from which George and Mrs. Crawley were gazing upon the calm ocean spread shining before them, while Rawdon and Jos were engaged at backgammon within—Amelia couched in a great chair quite neglected, and watching both these parties, felt a despair

A Family Party
at Brighton

and remorse such as were bitter companions for that tender lonely soul. Scarce a week was past, and it was come to this! The future, had she regarded it, offered a dismal prospect; but Emmy was too shy, so to speak, to look to that, and embark alone on that wide sea, and unfit to navigate it without a guide and protector. I know Miss Smith has a mean opinion of her. But how many, my dear Madam, are endowed with your prodigious strength of mind?

"Gad, what a fine night, and how bright the moon is!" George said, with a puff of his cigar, which went soaring up skywards.

"How delicious they smell in the open air! I adore them. Who'd think the moon was two hundred and thirty-six thousand eight hundred and forty-seven miles off?" Becky added, gazing at that orb with a smile. "Isn't it clever of me to remember that? Pooh! we learned it all at Miss Pinkerton's! How calm the sea is, and how clear everything. I declare I can almost see the coast of France!" and her bright green eyes streamed out, and shot into the night as if they *could* see through it.

"Do you know what I intend to do one morning?" she said; "I find I can swim beautifully, and some day, when my Aunt Crawley's companion—old Briggs, you know—you remember her—that hook-nosed woman, with the long wisps of hair—when Briggs goes out to bathe, I intend to dive under her awning, and insist on a reconciliation in the water. Isn't that a stratagem?"

George burst out laughing at the idea of this aquatic meeting. "What's the row there, you two?" Rawdon shouted out, rattling the box. Amelia was making a

fool of herself in an absurd hysterical manner, and retired to her own room to whimper in private.

Our history is destined in this chapter to go backwards and forwards in a very irresolute manner seemingly, and having conducted our story to to-morrow presently, we shall immediately again have occasion to step back to yesterday, so that the whole of the tale may get a hearing. As you behold at her Majesty's drawing-room, the ambassadors' and high dignitaries' carriages whisk off from a private door, while Captain Jones's ladies are waiting for their fly: as you see in the Secretary of the Treasury's antechamber, a half-dozen of petitioners waiting patiently for their audience, and called out one by one, when suddenly an Irish member or some eminent personage enters the apartment, and instantly walks in to Mr. Under-Secretary over the heads of all the people present: so in the conduct of a tale, the romancer is obliged to exercise this most partial sort of justice. Although all the little incidents must be heard, yet they must be put off when the great events make their appearance; and surely such a circumstance as that which brought Dobbin to Brighton, viz., the ordering out of the Guards and the line to Belgium, and the mustering of the allied armies in that country under the command of his Grace the Duke of Wellington—such a dignified circumstance as that, I say, was entitled to the *pas* over all minor occurrences whereof this history is composed mainly, and hence a little trifling disarrangement and disorder was excusable and becoming. We have only now advanced in time so far beyond Chapter XXII. as to have got our various characters up into their dressing-rooms before the dinner, which took place as usual on the day of Dobbin's arrival.

George was too humane or too much occupied with the tie of his neckcloth to convey at once all the news to Amelia which his comrade had brought with him from London. He came into her room, however, holding the attorney's letter in his hand, and with so solemn and important an air that his wife, always ingeniously on the watch for calamity, thought the worst was about to befall, and running up to her husband, besought her dearest George to tell her everything—he was ordered abroad; there would be a battle next week—she knew there would.

Dearest George parried the question about foreign service, and with a melancholy shake of the head said, "No, Emmy; it isn't that: it's not myself I care about: it's you. I have had bad news from my father. He refuses any communication with me; he has flung us off; and leaves us to poverty. *I* can rough it well enough; but you, my dear, how will you bear it? read here." And he handed her over the letter.

Amelia, with a look of tender alarm in her eyes, listened to her noble hero as he uttered the above generous sentiments, and sitting down on the bed, read the letter which George gave her with such a pompous martyr-like air. Her face cleared up as she read the document, however. The idea of sharing poverty and privation in company with the beloved object is, as we have before said, far from being disagreeable to a warm-hearted woman. The notion was actually pleasant to little Amelia. Then, as usual, she was ashamed of herself for feeling happy at such an indecorous moment, and checked her pleasure, saying demurely, "O, George, how your poor heart must bleed at the idea of being separated from your papa."

"It does," said George, with an agonised countenance.

"But he can't be angry with you long," she continued. "Nobody could, I'm sure. He must forgive you, my dearest, kindest husband. O, I shall never forgive myself if he does not."

"What vexes me, my poor Emmy, is not *my* misfortune, but yours," George said. "I don't care for a little poverty; and I think, without vanity, I've talents enough to make my own way."

"That you have," interposed his wife, who thought that war should cease, and her husband should be made a general instantly.

"Yes, I shall make my way as well as another," Osborne went on; "but you, my dear girl, how can I bear your being deprived of the comforts and station in society which my wife had a right to expect? My dearest girl in barracks; the wife of a soldier in a marching regiment; subject to all sorts of annoyance and privation! It makes me miserable."

Emmy, quite at ease, as this was her husband's only cause of disquiet, took his hand, and with a radiant face and smile began to warble that stanza from the favourite song of "Wapping Old Stairs," in which the heroine, after rebuking her Tom for inattention, promises "his trowsers to mend, and his grog too to make," if he will be constant and kind, and not forsake her. "Besides," she said, after a pause, during which she looked as pretty and happy as any young woman need, "isn't two thousand pounds an immense deal of money, George?"

George laughed at her naïveté; and finally they went down to dinner, Amelia clinging to George's arm, still

warbling the tune of "Wapping Old Stairs," and more pleased and light of mind than she had been for some days past.

Thus the repast, which at length came off, instead of being dismal, was an exceedingly brisk and merry one. The excitement of the campaign counteracted in George's mind the depression occasioned by the disinheriting letter. Dobbin still kept up his character of rattle. He amused the company with accounts of the army in Belgium, where nothing but fêtes and gaiety and fashion were going on. Then, having a particular end in view, this dexterous captain proceeded to describe Mrs. Major O'Dowd packing her own and her Major's wardrobe, and how his best epaulets had been stowed into a tea canister, whilst her own famous yellow turban, with the bird of paradise wrapped in brown paper, was locked up in the Major's tin cocked-hat case, and wondered what effect it would have at the French king's court at Ghent, or the great military balls at Brussels.

"Ghent! Brussels!" cried out Amelia with a sudden shock and start. "Is the regiment ordered away, George,—is it ordered away?" A look of terror came over the sweet smiling face, and she clung to George as by an instinct.

"Don't be afraid, dear," he said good-naturedly; "it is but a twelve hours' passage. It won't hurt you. You shall go, too, Emmy."

"*I* intend to go," said Becky. "I'm on the staff. General Tufto is a great flirt of mine. Isn't he, Rawdon?"

Rawdon laughed out with his usual roar. William Dobbin flushed up quite red. "She can't go," he said;

"think of the—of the danger," he was going to add; but had not all his conversation during dinner-time tended to prove there was none? He became very confused and silent.

"I must and will go," Amelia cried with the greatest spirit; and George, applauding her resolution, patted her under the chin, and asked all the persons present if they ever saw such a termagant of a wife, and agreed that the lady should bear him company. "We'll have Mrs. O'Dowd to chaperon you," he said. What cared she so long as her husband was near her? Thus somehow the bitterness of a parting was juggled away. Though war and danger were in store, war and danger might not befall for months to come. There was a respite at any rate, which made the timid little Amelia almost as happy as a full reprieve would have done, and which even Dobbin owned in his heart was very welcome. For, to be permitted to see her was now the greatest privilege and hope of his life, and he thought with himself secretly how he would watch and protect her. I wouldn't have let her go if I had been married to her, he thought. But George was the master, and his friend did not think fit to remonstrate.

Putting her arm round her friend's waist, Rebecca at length carried Amelia off from the dinner-table where so much business of importance had been discussed, and left the gentlemen in a highly exhilarated state, drinking and talking very gaily.

In the course of the evening Rawdon got a little family-note from his wife, which, although he crumpled it up and burnt it instantly in the candle, we had the good luck to read over Rebecca's shoulder. "Great news," she wrote. "Mrs. Bute is gone. Get the money

from Cupid to-night, as he'll be off to-morrow most likely. Mind this.—R." So when the little company was about adjourning to coffee in the women's apartment, Rawdon touched Osborne on the elbow, and said gracefully, "I say, Osborne, my boy, if quite convenient, I'll trouble you for that 'ere small trifle." It was not quite convenient, but nevertheless George gave him a considerable present instalment in bank-notes from his pocket-book, and a bill on his agents at a week's date, for the remaining sum.

This matter arranged, George, and Jos, and Dobbin, held a council of war over their cigars, and agreed that a general move should be made for London in Jos's open carriage the next day. Jos, I think, would have preferred staying until Rawdon Crawley quitted Brighton, but Dobbin and George overruled him, and he agreed to carry the party to town, and ordered four horses, as became his dignity. With these they set off in state, after breakfast, the next day. Amelia had risen very early in the morning, and packed her little trunks with the greatest alacrity, while Osborne lay in bed deploring that she had not a maid to help her. She was only too glad, however, to perform this office for herself. A dim uneasy sentiment about Rebecca filled her mind already; and although they kissed each other most tenderly at parting, yet we know what jealousy is; and Mrs. Amelia possessed that among other virtues of her sex.

Besides these characters who are coming and going away, we must remember that there were some other old friends of ours at Brighton; Miss Crawley, namely, and the suite in attendance upon her. Now, although Re-

becca and her husband were but at a few stones' throw of the lodgings which the invalid Miss Crawley occupied, the old lady's door remained as pitilessly closed to them as it had been heretofore in London. As long as she remained by the side of her sister-in-law, Mrs. Bute

Crawley took care that her beloved Matilda should not be agitated by a meeting with her nephew. When the spinster took her drive, the faithful Mrs. Bute sate beside her in the carriage. When Miss Crawley took the air in a chair, Mrs. Bute marched on one side of the vehicle, whilst honest Briggs occupied the other wing. And if they met Rawdon and his wife by chance—although the former constantly and obsequiously took off

his hat, the Miss-Crawley party passed him by with such a frigid and killing indifference, that Rawdon began to despair.

"We might as well be in London as here," Captain Rawdon often said, with a downcast air.

"A comfortable inn in Brighton is better than a spunging-house in Chancery Lane," his wife answered, who was of a more cheerful temperament. "Think of those two aides-de-camp of Mr. Moses, the sheriff's-officer, who watched our lodging for a week. Our friends here are very stupid, but Mr. Jos and Captain Cupid are better companions than Mr. Moses's men, Rawdon, my love."

"I wonder the writs haven't followed me down here," Rawdon continued, still desponding.

"When they do, we'll find means to give them the slip," said dauntless little Becky, and further pointed out to her husband the great comfort and advantage of meeting Jos and Osborne, whose acquaintance had brought to Rawdon Crawley a most timely little supply of ready money.

"It will hardly be enough to pay the inn bill," grumbled the Guardsman.

"Why need we pay it?" said the lady, who had an answer for everything.

Through Rawdon's valet, who still kept up a trifling acquaintance with the male inhabitants of Miss Crawley's servants' hall, and was instructed to treat the coachman to drink whenever they met, old Miss Crawley's movements were pretty well known by our young couple; and Rebecca luckily bethought herself of being unwell, and of calling in the same apothecary who was in attendance upon the spinster, so that their informa-

tion was on the whole tolerably complete. Nor was Miss Briggs, although forced to adopt a hostile attitude, secretly inimical to Rawdon and his wife. She was naturally of a kindly and forgiving disposition. Now that the cause of jealousy was removed, her dislike for Rebecca disappeared also, and she remembered the latter's invariable good words and good humour. And, indeed, she and Mrs. Firkin, the lady's-maid, and the whole of Miss Crawley's household, groaned under the tyranny of the triumphant Mrs. Bute.

As often will be the case, that good but imperious woman pushed her advantages too far, and her successes quite unmercifully. She had in the course of a few weeks brought the invalid to such a state of helpless docility, that the poor soul yielded herself entirely to her sister's orders, and did not even dare to complain of her slavery to Briggs or Firkin. Mrs. Bute measured out the glasses of wine which Miss Crawley was daily allowed to take, with irresistible accuracy, greatly to the annoyance of Firkin and the butler, who found themselves deprived of control over even the sherry-bottle. She apportioned the sweet-breads, jellies, chickens; their quantity and order. Night and noon and morning she brought the abominable drinks ordained by the Doctor, and made her patient swallow them with so affecting an obedience, that Firkin said " my poor Missus du take her physic like a lamb." She prescribed the drive in the carriage or the ride in the chair, and, in a word, ground down the old lady in her convalescence in such a way as only belongs to your proper-managing, motherly, moral woman. If ever the patient faintly resisted, and pleaded for a little bit more dinner or a little drop less medicine, the nurse threatened her with

instantaneous death, when Miss Crawley instantly gave in. "She's no spirit left in her," Firkin remarked to Briggs; "she ain't 'ave called me a fool these three weeks." Finally, Mrs. Bute had made up her mind to dismiss the aforesaid honest lady's-maid, Mr. Bowls the large confidential man, and Briggs herself, and to send for her daughters from the Rectory, previous to removing the dear invalid bodily to Queen's Crawley, when an odious accident happened which called her away from duties so pleasing. The Reverend Bute Crawley, her husband, riding home one night, fell with his horse and broke his collar-bone. Fever and inflammatory symptoms set in, and Mrs. Bute was forced to leave Sussex for Hampshire. As soon as ever Bute was restored, she promised to return to her dearest friend, and departed, leaving the strongest injunctions with the household regarding their behaviour to their mistress; and as soon as she got into the Southampton coach, there was such a jubilee and sense of relief in all Miss Crawley's house, as the company of persons assembled there had not experienced for many a week before. That very day Miss Crawley left off her afternoon dose of medicine: that afternoon Bowls opened an independent bottle of sherry for himself and Mrs. Firkin: that night Miss Crawley and Miss Briggs indulged in a game of piquet instead of one of Porteus's sermons. It was as in the old nursery-story, when the stick forgot to beat the dog, and the whole course of events underwent a peaceful and happy revolution.

At a very early hour in the morning, twice or thrice a week, Miss Briggs used to betake herself to a bathing-machine, and disport in the water in a flannel gown and an oilskin cap. Rebecca, as we have seen, was aware of

this circumstance, and though she did not attempt to storm Briggs as she had threatened, and actually dive into that lady's presence and surprise her under the sacredness of the awning, Mrs. Rawdon determined to attack Briggs as she came away from her bath, refreshed and invigorated by her dip, and likely to be in good humour.

So getting up very early the next morning, Becky brought the telescope in their sitting-room, which faced the sea, to bear upon the bathing-machines on the beach; saw Briggs arrive, enter her box, and put out to sea; and was on the shore just as the nymph of whom she came in quest stepped out of the little caravan on to the shingles. It was a pretty picture: the beach; the bathing-women's faces; the long line of rocks and building were blushing and bright in the sunshine. Rebecca wore a kind, tender smile on her face, and was holding out her pretty white hand as Briggs emerged from the box. What could Briggs do but accept the salutation?

"Miss Sh—, Mrs. Crawley," she said.

Mrs. Crawley seized her hand, pressed it to her heart, and with a sudden impulse, flinging her arms round Briggs, kissed her affectionately. "Dear, dear friend!" she said, with a touch of such natural feeling, that Miss Briggs of course at once began to melt, and even the bathing-woman was mollified.

Rebecca found no difficulty in engaging Briggs in a long, intimate, and delightful conversation. Everything that had passed since the morning of Becky's sudden departure from Miss Crawley's house in Park Lane up to the present day, and Mrs. Bute's happy retreat, was discussed and described by Briggs. All Miss Crawley's symptoms, and the particulars of her illness and

medical treatment, were narrated by the confidante with that fulness and accuracy which women delight in. About their complaints and their doctors do ladies ever tire of talking to each other? Briggs did not on this occasion; nor did Rebecca weary of listening. She was thankful, truly thankful, that the dear kind Briggs, that the faithful, the invaluable Firkin, had been permitted to remain with their benefactress through her illness. Heaven bless her! though she, Rebecca, had seemed to act undutifully towards Miss Crawley; yet was not her fault a natural and excusable one? Could she help giving her hand to the man who had won her heart? Briggs, the sentimental, could only turn up her eyes to heaven at this appeal, and heave a sympathetic sigh, and think that she, too, had given away her affections long years ago, and own that Rebecca was no very great criminal.

" Can I ever forget her who so befriended the friendless orphan? No, though she has cast me off," the latter said, " I shall never cease to love her, and I would devote my life to her service. As my own benefactress, as my beloved Rawdon's adored relative, I love and admire Miss Crawley, dear Miss Briggs, beyond any woman in the world, and next to her I love all those who are faithful to her. *I* would never have treated Miss Crawley's faithful friends as that odious designing Mrs. Bute has done. Rawdon, who was all heart," Rebecca continued, " although his outward manners might seem rough and careless, had said a hundred times, with tears in his eyes, that he blessed Heaven for sending his dearest Aunty two such admirable nurses as her attached Firkin and her admirable Miss Briggs. Should the machinations of the horrible Mrs. Bute end, as she too much feared

they would, in banishing everybody that Miss Crawley loved from her side, and leaving that poor lady a victim to those harpies at the Rectory, Rebecca besought her (Miss Briggs) to remember that her own home, humble as it was, was always open to receive Briggs. Dear friend," she exclaimed, in a transport of enthusiasm, "*some* hearts can *never* forget benefits; *all* women are not Bute Crawleys! Though why should I complain of her," Rebecca added; "though I have been her tool and the victim to her arts, do I not owe my dearest Rawdon to her?" And Rebecca unfolded to Briggs all Mrs. Bute's conduct at Queen's Crawley, which, though unintelligible to her then, was clearly enough explained by the events now,—now that the attachment had sprung up which Mrs. Bute had encouraged by a thousand artifices,—now that two innocent people had fallen into the snares which she had laid for them, and loved and married and been ruined through her schemes.

It was all very true. Briggs saw the stratagems as clearly as possible. Mrs. Bute had made the match between Rawdon and Rebecca. Yet, though the latter was a perfectly innocent victim, Miss Briggs could not disguise from her friend her fear that Miss Crawley's affections were hopelessly estranged from Rebecca, and that the old lady would never forgive her nephew for making so imprudent a marriage.

On this point Rebecca had her own opinion, and still kept up a good heart. If Miss Crawley did not forgive them at present, she might at least relent on a future day. Even now, there was only that puling, sickly Pitt Crawley between Rawdon and a baronetcy; and should anything happen to the former, all would be well. At all events, to have Mrs. Bute's designs exposed, and her-

self well abused, was a satisfaction, and might be advantageous to Rawdon's interest; and Rebecca, after an hour's chat with her recovered friend, left her with the most tender demonstrations of regard, and quite assured that the conversation they had had together would be reported to Miss Crawley before many hours were over.

This interview ended, it became full time for Rebecca to return to her inn, where all the party of the previous day were assembled at a farewell breakfast. Rebecca took such a tender leave of Amelia as became two women who loved each other as sisters; and having used her handkerchief plentifully, and hung on her friend's neck as if they were parting for ever, and waved the handkerchief (which was quite dry, by the way) out of window, as the carriage drove off, she came back to the breakfast table, and ate some prawns with a good deal of appetite, considering her emotion; and while she was munching these delicacies, explained to Rawdon what had occurred in her morning walk between herself and Briggs. Her hopes were very high: she made her husband share them. She generally succeeded in making her husband share all her opinions, whether melancholy or cheerful.

"You will now, if you please, my dear, sit down at the writing-table and pen me a pretty little letter to Miss Crawley, in which you'll say that you are a good boy, and that sort of thing." So Rawdon sate down, and wrote off, "Brighton, Thursday," and "My dear Aunt," with great rapidity: but there the gallant officer's imagination failed him. He mumbled the end of his pen, and looked up in his wife's face. She could not help laughing at his rueful countenance, and marching

up and down the room with her hands behind her, the little woman began to dictate a letter, which he took down.

"Before quitting the country and commencing a campaign, which very possibly may be fatal,"

"What?" said Rawdon, rather surprised, but took the humour of the phrase, and presently wrote it down with a grin.

"Which very possibly may be fatal, I have come hither—"

"Why not say come here, Becky? come here's grammar," the dragoon interposed.

"I have come hither," Rebecca insisted, with a stamp of her foot, "to say farewell to my dearest and earliest friend. I beseech you before I go, not perhaps to return, once more to let me press the hand from which I have received nothing but kindnesses all my life."

"Kindnesses all my life," echoed Rawdon, scratching down the words, and quite amazed at his own facility of composition.

"I ask nothing from you but that we should part not in anger. I have the pride of my family on some points, though not on all. I married a painter's daughter, and am not ashamed of the union."

"No, run me through the body if I am!" Rawdon ejaculated.

"You old booby," Rebecca said, pinching his ear and looking over to see that he made no mistakes in spelling —"beseech is not spelt with an *a*, and earliest is." So he altered these words, bowing to the superior knowledge of his little Missis.

"I thought that you were aware of the progress of my attachment," Rebecca continued: "I knew that

Mrs. Bute Crawley confirmed and encouraged it. But I make no reproaches. I married a poor woman, and am content to abide by what I have done. Leave your property, dear Aunt, as you will. *I* shall never complain of the way in which you dispose of it. I would have you believe that I love you for yourself, and not for money's sake. I want to be reconciled to you ere I leave England. Let me, let me see you before I go. A few weeks or months hence it may be too late, and I cannot bear the notion of quitting the country without a kind word of farewell from you."

"She won't recognise my style in *that*," said Becky. "I made the sentences short and brisk on purpose." And this authentic missive was despatched under cover to Miss Briggs.

Old Miss Crawley laughed when Briggs, with great mystery, handed her over this candid and simple statement. "We may read it now Mrs. Bute is away," she said. "Read it to me, Briggs."

When Briggs had read the epistle out, her patroness laughed more. "Don't you see, you goose," she said to Briggs, who professed to be much touched by the honest affection which pervaded the composition, "Don't you see that Rawdon never wrote a word of it. He never wrote to me without asking for money in his life, and all his letters are full of bad spelling, and dashes, and bad grammar. It is that little serpent of a governess who rules him." They are all alike, Miss Crawley thought in her heart. They all want me dead, and are hankering for my money.

"I don't mind seeing Rawdon," she added, after a pause, and in a tone of perfect indifference. "I had just as soon shake hands with him as not. Provided

there is no scene, why should n't we meet? I don't mind. But human patience has its limits; and mind, my dear, I respectfully decline to receive Mrs. Rawdon—I can't support *that* quite"—and Miss Briggs was fain to be content with this half-message of conciliation; and thought that the best method of bringing the old lady and her nephew together, was to warn Rawdon to be in waiting on the Cliff, when Miss Crawley went out for her air in her chair.

There they met. I don't know whether Miss Crawley had any private feeling of regard or emotion upon seeing her old favourite; but she held out a couple of fingers to him with as smiling and good-humoured an air, as if they had met only the day before. And as for Rawdon, he turned as red as scarlet, and wrung off Briggs's hand, so great was his rapture and his confusion at the meeting. Perhaps it was interest that moved him: or perhaps affection: perhaps he was touched by the change which the illness of the last few weeks had wrought in his aunt.

"The old girl has always acted like a trump to me," he said to his wife, as he narrated the interview, "and I felt, you know, rather queer, and that sort of thing. I walked by the side of the what-d'ye-call-'em, you know, and to her own door, where Bowls came to help her in. And I wanted to go in very much, only—"

"*You did n't go in,* Rawdon!" screamed his wife.

"No, my dear; I 'm hanged if I was n't afraid when it came to the point."

"You fool! you ought to have gone in, and never come out again," Rebecca said.

"Don't call me names," said the big Guardsman,

sulkily. "Perhaps I *was* a fool, Becky, but you should n't say so;" and he gave his wife a look, such as his countenance could wear when angered, and such as was not pleasant to face.

"Well, dearest, to-morrow you must be on the look-out, and go and see her, mind, whether she asks you or no," Rebecca said, trying to soothe her angry yoke-mate. On which he replied, that he would do exactly as he liked, and would just thank her to keep a civil tongue in her head—and the wounded husband went away, and passed the forenoon at the billiard-room, sulky, silent, and suspicious.

But before the night was over he was compelled to give in, and own, as usual, to his wife's superior prudence and foresight, by the most melancholy confirmation of the presentiments which she had regarding the consequences of the mistake which he had made. Miss Crawley *must* have had some emotion upon seeing him and shaking hands with him after so long a rupture. She mused upon the meeting a considerable time. "Rawdon is getting very fat and old, Briggs," she said to her companion. "His nose has become red, and he is exceedingly coarse in appearance. His marriage to that woman has hopelessly vulgarised him. Mrs. Bute always said they drank together; and I have no doubt they do. Yes: he smelt of gin abominably. I remarked it. Did n't you?"

In vain Briggs interposed that Mrs. Bute spoke ill of everybody: and, as far as a person in *her* humble position could judge, was an—

"An artful designing woman? Yes, so she is, and she does speak ill of every one,—but I am certain that

woman has made Rawdon drink. All those low people do—"

"He was very much affected at seeing you, ma'am," the companion said; "and I am sure, when you remember that he is going to the field of danger—"

"How much money has he promised you, Briggs?" the old spinster cried out, working herself into a nervous rage—"there now, of course, you begin to cry. I hate scenes. Why am I always to be worried? Go and cry up in your own room, and send Firkin to me,—no, stop, sit down and blow your nose, and leave off crying, and write a letter to Captain Crawley." Poor Briggs went and placed herself obediently at the writing-book. Its leaves were blotted all over with relics of the firm, strong, rapid handwriting of the spinster's late amanuensis, Mrs. Bute Crawley.

"Begin 'My dear sir,' or 'Dear sir,' that will be better, and say you are desired by Miss Crawley—no, by Miss Crawley's medical man, by Mr. Creamer, to state, that my health is such that all strong emotions would be dangerous in my present delicate condition—and that I must decline any family discussions or interviews whatever. And thank him for coming to Brighton, and so forth, and beg him not to stay any longer on my account. And, Miss Briggs, you may add that I wish him a *bon voyage,* and that if he will take the trouble to call upon my lawyer's in Gray's Inn Square, he will find there a communication for him. Yes, that will do; and that will make him leave Brighton." The benevolent Briggs penned this sentence with the utmost satisfaction.

"To seize upon me the very day after Mrs. Bute was gone," the old lady prattled on; "it was too indecent. Briggs, my dear, write to Mrs. Crawley, and say *she*

need n't come back. No—she need n't—and she shan't —and I won't be a slave in my own house—and I won't be starved and choked with poison. They all want to kill me—all—all "—and with this the lonely old woman burst into a scream of hysterical tears.

The last scene of her dismal Vanity Fair comedy was fast approaching; the tawdry lamps were going out one by one; and the dark curtain was almost ready to descend.

That final paragraph, which referred Rawdon to Miss Crawley's solicitor in London, and which Briggs had written so good-naturedly, consoled the dragoon and his wife somewhat, after their first blank disappointment, on reading the spinster's refusal of a reconciliation. And it effected the purpose for which the old lady had caused it to be written, by making Rawdon very eager to get to London.

Out of Jos's losings and George Osborne's bank-notes, he paid his bill at the inn, the landlord whereof does not probably know to this day how doubtfully his account once stood. For, as a general sends his baggage to the rear before an action, Rebecca had wisely packed up all their chief valuables and sent them off under care of George's servant, who went in charge of the trunks on the coach back to London. Rawdon and his wife returned by the same conveyance next day.

" I should have liked to see the old girl before we went," Rawdon said. " She looks so cut up and altered that I 'm sure she can't last long. I wonder what sort of a cheque I shall have at Waxy's. Two hundred—it can't be less than two hundred,—hey, Becky? "

In consequence of the repeated visits of the aides-de-camp of the Sheriff of Middlesex, Rawdon and his wife

did not go back to their lodgings at Brompton, but put up at an inn. Early the next morning, Rebecca had an opportunity of seeing them as she skirted that suburb on her road to old Mrs. Sedley's house at Fulham, whither she went to look for her dear Amelia and her Brighton friends. They were all off to Chatham, thence to Harwich, to take shipping for Belgium with the regiment —kind old Mrs. Sedley very much depressed and tearful, solitary. Returning from this visit, Rebecca found her husband, who had been off to Gray's Inn, and learnt his fate. He came back furious.

"By Jove, Becky," says he, "she's only given me twenty pound!"

Though it told against themselves, the joke was too good, and Becky burst out laughing at Rawdon's discomfiture.

CHAPTER XXVI

BETWEEN LONDON AND CHATHAM

N quitting Brighton, our friend George, as became a person of rank and fashion travelling in a barouche with four horses, drove in state to a fine hotel in Cavendish Square, where a suite of splendid rooms, and a table magnificently furnished with plate and surrounded by a half-dozen of black and silent waiters, was ready to receive the young gentleman and his bride. George did the honours of the place with a princely air to Jos and Dobbin; and Amelia, for the first time, and with exceeding shyness and timidity, presided at what George called her own table.

George pooh-poohed the wine and bullied the waiters royally, and Jos gobbled the turtle with immense satisfaction. Dobbin helped him to it; for the lady of the house, before whom the tureen was placed, was so ignorant of the contents, that she was going to help Mr. Sedley without bestowing upon him either calipash or calipee.

The splendour of the entertainment, and the apartments in which it was given, alarmed Mr. Dobbin, who remonstrated after dinner, when Jos was asleep in the great chair. But, in vain he cried out against the enor-

mity of turtle and champagne that was fit for an archbishop. "I've always been accustomed to travel like a gentleman," George said, "and, damme, my wife shall travel like a lady. As long as there's a shot in the locker, *she* shall want for nothing," said the generous fellow, quite pleased with himself for his magnificence of spirit. Nor did Dobbin try and convince him that Amelia's happiness was not centred in turtle-soup.

A while after dinner, Amelia timidly expressed a wish to go and see her mamma, at Fulham: which permission George granted her with some grumbling. And she tripped away to her enormous bed-room, in the centre of which stood the enormous funereal bed, "that the Emperor Halixander's sister slep' in when the allied sufferings was here," and put on her little bonnet and shawl with the utmost eagerness and pleasure. George was still drinking claret when she returned to the dining-room, and made no signs of moving. "Ar'n't you coming with me, dearest?" she asked him. No; the "dearest" had "business" that night. His man should get her a coach and go with her. And the coach being at the door of the hotel, Amelia made George a little disappointed curtsey after looking vainly into his face once or twice, and went sadly down the great staircase, Captain Dobbin after, who handed her into the vehicle, and saw it drive away to its destination. The very valet was ashamed of mentioning the address to the hackney-coachman before the hotel-waiters, and promised to instruct him when they got further on.

Dobbin walked home to his old quarters at the Slaughters', thinking very likely that it would be delightful to be in that hackney-coach, along with Mrs. Osborne. George was evidently of quite a different

taste; for when he had taken wine enough, he went off to half-price at the play, to see Mr. Kean perform in Shylock. Captain Osborne was a great lover of the drama, and had himself performed high-comedy characters with great distinction in several garrison theatrical entertainments. Jos slept on until long after dark, when he woke up with a start at the motions of his servant, who was removing and emptying the decanters on the table; and the hackney-coach stand was again put into requisition for a carriage to convey this stout hero to his lodgings and bed.

Mrs. Sedley, you may be sure, clasped her daughter to her heart with all maternal eagerness and affection, running out of the door as the carriage drew up before the little garden-gate, to welcome the weeping, trembling, young bride. Old Mr. Clapp, who was in his shirt-sleeves, trimming the garden-plot, shrank back alarmed. The Irish servant-lass rushed up from the kitchen and smiled a "God bless you." Amelia could hardly walk along the flags and up the steps into the parlour.

How the flood-gates were opened, and mother and daughter wept, when they were together embracing each other in this sanctuary, may readily be imagined by every reader who possesses the least sentimental turn. When don't ladies weep? At what occasion of joy, sorrow, or other business of life? and, after such an event as a marriage, mother and daughter were surely at liberty to give way to a sensibility which is as tender as it is refreshing. About a question of marriage I have seen women who hate each other kiss and cry together quite fondly. How much more do they feel when they

love! Good mothers are married over again at their daughters' weddings: and as for subsequent events, who does not know how ultra-maternal grandmothers are?—in fact a woman, until she is a grandmother, does not often really know what to be a mother is. Let us respect Amelia and her mamma whispering and whimpering and laughing and crying in the parlour and the twilight. Old Mr. Sedley did. *He* had not divined who was in the carriage when it drove up. He had not flown out to meet his daughter, though he kissed her very warmly when she entered the room (where he was occupied, as usual, with his papers and tapes and statements of ac-

counts), and after sitting with the mother and daughter for a short time, he very wisely left the little apartment in their possession.

George's valet was looking on in a very supercilious manner at Mr. Clapp in his shirt-sleeves, watering his

rose-bushes. He took off his hat, however, with much condescension to Mr. Sedley, who asked news about his son-in-law, and about Jos's carriage, and whether his horses had been down to Brighton, and about that infernal traitor Bonaparty, and the war; until the Irish maid-servant came with a plate and a bottle of wine, from which the old gentleman insisted upon helping the valet. He gave him a half-guinea, too, which the servant pocketed with a mixture of wonder and contempt. "To the health of your master and mistress, Trotter," Mr. Sedley said, "and here's something to drink your health when you get home, Trotter."

There were but nine days past since Amelia had left that little cottage and home—and yet how far off the time seemed since she had bidden it farewell. What a gulf lay between her and that past life. She could look back to it from her present standing-place, and contemplate, almost as another being, the young unmarried girl absorbed in her love, having no eyes but for one special object, receiving parental affection if not ungratefully, at least indifferently, and as if it were her due—her whole heart and thoughts bent on the accomplishment of one desire. The review of those days, so lately gone yet so far away, touched her with shame; and the aspect of the kind parents filled her with tender remorse. Was the prize gained—the heaven of life—and the winner still doubtful and unsatisfied? As his hero and heroine pass the matrimonial barrier, the novelist generally drops the curtain, as if the drama were over then: the doubts and struggles of life ended: as if, once landed in the marriage country, all were green and pleasant there: and wife and husband had nothing to do but to link each other's arms together, and wander

gently downwards towards old age in happy and perfect fruition. But our little Amelia was just on the bank of her new country, and was already looking anxiously back towards the sad friendly figures waving farewell to her across the stream, from the other distant shore.

In honour of the young bride's arrival, her mother thought it necessary to prepare I don't know what festive entertainment, and after the first ebullition of talk, took leave of Mrs. George Osborne for a while, and dived down to the lower regions of the house to a sort of kitchen-parlour (occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Clapp, and in the evening, when her dishes were washed and her curl-papers removed, by Miss Flannigan, the Irish servant), there to take measures for the preparing of a magnificent ornamented tea. All people have their ways of expressing kindness, and it seemed to Mrs. Sedley that a muffin and a quantity of orange marmalade spread out in a little cut-glass saucer would be peculiarly agreeable refreshments to Amelia in her most interesting situation.

While these delicacies were being transacted below, Amelia, leaving the drawing-room, walked up stairs and found herself, she scarce knew how, in the little room which she had occupied before her marriage, and in that very chair in which she had passed so many bitter hours. She sank back in its arms as if it were an old friend; and fell to thinking over the past week, and the life beyond it. Already to be looking sadly and vaguely back: always to be pining for something which, when obtained, brought doubt and sadness rather than pleasure; here was the lot of our poor little creature, and harmless lost wanderer in the great struggling crowds of Vanity Fair.

Here she sate, and recalled to herself fondly that image of George to which she had knelt before marriage. Did she own to herself how different the real man was from that superb young hero whom she had worshipped? It requires many, many years—and a man must be very

bad indeed—before a woman's pride and vanity will let her own to such a confession. Then Rebecca's twinkling green eyes and baleful smile lighted upon her, and filled her with dismay. And so she sate for a while indulging in her usual mood of selfish brooding, in that very listless melancholy attitude in which the honest maid-servant had found her, on the day when she brought up the letter in which George renewed his offer of marriage.

She looked at the little white bed, which had been hers a few days before, and thought she would like to sleep in it that night, and wake, as formerly, with her mother smiling over her in the morning. Then she thought with terror of the great funereal damask pavilion in the vast and dingy state bed-room, which was awaiting her at the grand hotel in Cavendish Square. Dear little white bed! how many a long night had she wept on its pillow! How she had despaired and hoped to die there; and now were not all her wishes accomplished, and the lover of whom she had despaired her own for ever? Kind mother! how patiently and tenderly she had watched round that bed! She went and knelt down by the bed-side; and there this wounded and timorous, but gentle and loving soul, sought for consolation, where as yet, it must be owned, our little girl had but seldom looked for it. Love had been her faith hitherto; and the sad, bleeding, disappointed heart began to feel the want of another consoler.

Have we a right to repeat or to overhear her prayers? These, brother, are secrets, and out of the domain of Vanity Fair, in which our story lies.

But this may be said, that when the tea was finally announced, our young lady came down stairs a great deal more cheerful; that she did not despond, or deplore her fate, or think about George's coldness, or Rebecca's eyes, as she had been wont to do of late. She went down stairs, and kissed her father and mother, and talked to the old gentleman, and made him more merry than he had been for many a day. She sate down at the piano which Dobbin had bought for her, and sang over all her father's favourite old songs. She pronounced the tea to be excellent, and praised the exquisite taste in which

the marmalade was arranged in the saucers. And in determining to make everybody else happy, she found herself so; and was sound asleep in the great funereal pavilion, and only woke up with a smile when George arrived from the theatre.

For the next day, George had more important "business" to transact than that which took him to see Mr. Kean in Shylock. Immediately on his arrival in London he had written off to his father's solicitors, signifying his royal pleasure that an interview should take place between them on the morrow. His hotel bill, losses at billiards and cards to Captain Crawley, had almost drained the young man's purse, which wanted replenishing before he set out on his travels, and he had no resource but to infringe upon the two thousand pounds which the attorneys were commissioned to pay over to him. He had a perfect belief in his own mind that his father would relent before very long. How could any parent be obdurate for a length of time against such a paragon as he was? If his mere past and personal merits did not succeed in mollifying his father, George determined that he would distinguish himself so prodigiously in the ensuing campaign that the old gentleman must give in to him. And if not? Bah! the world was before him. His luck might change at cards, and there was a deal of spending in two thousand pounds.

So he sent off Amelia once more in a carriage to her mamma, with strict orders and carte blanche to the two ladies to purchase everything requisite for a lady of Mrs. George Osborne's fashion, who was going on a foreign tour. They had but one day to complete the outfit, and it may be imagined that their business therefore occupied them pretty fully. In a carriage once more, bus-

tling about from milliner to linendraper, escorted back to the carriage by obsequious shopmen or polite owners, Mrs. Sedley was herself again almost, and sincerely happy for the first time since their misfortunes. Nor was Mrs. Amelia at all above the pleasure of shopping, and bargaining, and seeing and buying pretty things. (Would any man, the most philosophic, give twopence for a woman who was?) She gave herself a little treat, obedient to her husband's orders, and purchased a quantity of lady's gear, showing a great deal of taste and elegant discernment, as all the shopfolks said.

And about the war that was ensuing, Mrs. Osborne was not much alarmed; Bonaparty was to be crushed almost without a struggle. Margate packets were sailing every day, filled with men of fashion and ladies of note, on their way to Brussels and Ghent. People were going not so much to a war as to a fashionable tour. The newspapers laughed the wretched upstart and swindler to scorn. Such a Corsican wretch as that withstand the armies of Europe and the genius of the immortal Wellington! Amelia held him in utter contempt; for it needs not to be said that this soft and gentle creature took her opinions from those people who surrounded her, such fidelity being much too humble-minded to think for itself. Well, in a word, she and her mother performed a great day's shopping, and she acquitted herself with considerable liveliness and credit on this her first appearance in the genteel world of London.

George meanwhile, with his hat on one side, his elbows squared, and his swaggering martial air, made for Bedford Row, and stalked into the attorney's offices as if he was lord of every pale-faced clerk who was scribbling there. He ordered somebody to inform Mr. Higgs that

Captain Osborne was waiting, in a fierce and patronizing way, as if the *pékin* of an attorney, who had thrice his brains, fifty times his money, and a thousand times his experience, was a wretched underling who should instantly leave all his business in life to attend on the Captain's pleasure. He did not see the sneer of contempt which passed all round the room, from the first clerk to the articled gents, from the articled gents to the ragged writers and white-faced runners, in clothes too tight for them, as he sate there tapping his boot with his cane, and thinking what a parcel of miserable poor devils these were. The miserable poor devils knew all about his affairs. They talked about them over their pints of beer at their public-house clubs to other clerks of a night. Ye Gods, what do not attorneys and attorneys' clerks know in London! Nothing is hidden from their inquisition, and their familiars mutely rule our city.

Perhaps George expected, when he entered Mr. Higgs's apartment, to find that gentleman commissioned to give him some message of compromise or conciliation from his father; perhaps his haughty and cold demeanour was adopted as a sign of his spirit and resolution: but if so, his fierceness was met by a chilling coolness and indifference on the attorney's part, that rendered swaggering absurd. He pretended to be writing at a paper, when the Captain entered. "Pray, sit down, sir," said he, "and I will attend to your little affair in a moment. Mr. Poe, get the release papers, if you please;" and then he fell to writing again.

Poe having produced those papers, his chief calculated the amount of two thousand pounds stock at the rate of the day; and asked Captain Osborne whether

he would take the sum in a cheque upon the bankers, or whether he should direct the latter to purchase stock to that amount. "One of the late Mrs. Osborne's trustees is out of town," he said indifferently, "but my client wishes to meet your wishes, and have done with the business as quick as possible."

"Give me a cheque, sir," said the Captain very surlily. "Damn the shillings and halfpence, sir," he added, as the lawyer was making out the amount of the draft; and, flattering himself that by this stroke of magnanimity he had put the old quiz to the blush, he stalked out of the office with the paper in his pocket.

"That chap will be in gaol in two years," Mr. Higgs said to Mr. Poe.

"Won't O. come round, sir, don't you think?"

"Won't the monument come round?" Mr. Higgs replied.

"He 's going it pretty fast," said the clerk. "He 's only married a week, and I saw him and some other military chaps handing Mrs. Highflyer to her carriage after the play." And then another case was called, and Mr. George Osborne thenceforth dismissed from these worthy gentlemen's memory.

The draft was upon our friends Hulker and Bullock of Lombard Street, to whose house, still thinking he was doing business, George bent his way, and from whom he received his money. Frederick Bullock, Esq., whose yellow face was over a ledger, at which sate a demure clerk, happened to be in the banking-room when George entered. His yellow face turned to a more deadly colour when he saw the Captain, and he slunk back guiltily into the inmost parlour. George was too busy gloating over the money (for he had never had such a sum

before), to mark the countenance or flight of the cadaverous suitor of his sister.

Fred Bullock told old Osborne of his son's appearance and conduct. "He came in as bold as brass," said Frederick. "He has drawn out every shilling. How long will a few hundred pounds last such a chap as that?" Osborne swore with a great oath that he little cared when or how soon he spent it. Fred dined every day in Russell Square now. But altogether, George was highly pleased with his day's business. All his own baggage and outfit was put into a state of speedy preparation, and he paid Amelia's purchases with cheques on his agents, and with the splendour of a lord.

CHAPTER XXVII

IN WHICH AMELIA JOINS HER REGIMENT

WHEN Jos's fine carriage drove up to the inn door at Chatham, the first face which Amelia recognized was the friendly countenance of Captain Dobbin, who had been pacing the street for an hour past in expectation of his friends' arrival. The Captain, with shells on his frock-coat, and a crimson sash and sabre, presented a military appearance, which made Jos quite proud to be able to claim such an acquaintance, and the stout civilian hailed him with a cordiality very different from the reception which Jos vouchsafed to his friend in Brighton and Bond Street.

Along with the Captain was Ensign Stubble; who, as the barouche neared the inn, burst out with an exclamation of " By Jove! what a pretty girl; " highly applauding Osborne's choice. Indeed, Amelia dressed in her wedding-pelisse and pink ribbons, with a flush in her face, occasioned by rapid travel through the open air, looked so fresh and pretty, as fully to justify the Ensign's compliment. Dobbin liked him for making it. As he stepped forward to help the lady out of the car-

riage, Stubble saw what a pretty little hand she gave him, and what a sweet pretty little foot came tripping down the step. He blushed profusely, and made the very best bow of which he was capable; to which Amelia, seeing the number of the —th regiment embroidered on the Ensign's cap, replied with a blushing smile, and a curtsey on her part; which finished the young Ensign on the spot. Dobbin took most kindly to Mr. Stubble from that day, and encouraged him to talk about Amelia in their private walks, and at each other's quarters. It became the fashion, indeed, among all the honest young fellows of the —th to adore and admire Mrs. Osborne. Her simple artless behaviour, and modest kindness of demeanour, won all their unsophisticated hearts; all which simplicity and sweetness are quite impossible to describe in print. But who has not beheld these among women, and recognized the presence of all sorts of qualities in them, even though they say no more to you than that they are engaged to dance the next quadrille, or that it is very hot weather? George, always the champion of his regiment, rose immensely in the opinion of the youth of the corps, by his gallantry in marrying this portionless young creature, and by his choice of such a pretty kind partner.

In the sitting-room which was awaiting the travellers, Amelia, to her surprise, found a letter addressed to Mrs. Captain Osborne. It was a triangular billet, on pink paper, and sealed with a dove and an olive branch, and a profusion of light-blue sealing wax, and it was written in a very large, though undecided female hand.

"It's Peggy O'Dowd's fist," said George, laughing. "I know it by the kisses on the seal." And in fact, it was a note from Mrs. Major O'Dowd, requesting the

pleasure of Mrs. Osborne's company that very evening to a small friendly party. "You must go," George said. "You will make acquaintance with the regiment there. O'Dowd goes in command of the regiment, and Peggy goes in command of O'Dowd."

But they had not been for many minutes in the enjoyment of Mrs. O'Dowd's letter, when the door was flung open, and a stout jolly lady, in a riding habit, followed by a couple of officers of Ours, entered the room.

"Sure, I couldn't stop till tay-time. Present me, Garge, my dear fellow, to your lady. Madam, I'm deloighted to see ye; and to present to you me husband, Meejor O'Dowd;" and with this, the jolly lady in the riding-habit grasped Amelia's hand very warmly, and the latter knew at once that the lady was before her whom her husband had so often laughed at. "You've often heard of me from that husband of yours," said the lady, with great vivacity.

"You've often heard of her," echoed her husband, the Major.

Amelia answered, smiling, "that she had."

"And small good he's told you of me," Mrs. O'Dowd replied; adding that "George was a wicked divvle."

"That I'll go bail for," said the Major, trying to look knowing, at which George laughed; and Mrs. O'Dowd, with a tap of her whip, told the Major to be quiet; and then requested to be presented in form to Mrs. Captain Osborne.

"This, my dear," said George with great gravity, "is my very good, kind, and excellent friend, Auralia Margaretta, otherwise called Peggy."

"Faith, you're right," interposed the Major.

"Otherwise called Peggy, lady of Major Michael

O'Dowd, of our regiment, and daughter of Fitzjurld Ber'sford de Burgo Malony of Glenmalony, County Kildare."

"And Muryan Squeer, Doblin," said the lady with calm superiority.

"And Muryan Square, sure enough," the Major whispered.

"'Twas there ye coorted me, Meejor dear," the lady said; and the Major assented to this as to every other proposition which was made generally in company.

Major O'Dowd, who had served his sovereign in every

quarter of the world, and had paid for every step in his profession by some more than equivalent act of daring and gallantry, was the most modest, silent, sheep-faced and meek of little men, and as obedient to his wife as if he had been her tay-boy. At the mess-table he sat silently, and drank a great deal. When full of liquor, he reeled silently home. When he spoke, it was to agree with everybody on every conceivable point; and he passed through life in perfect ease and good humour. The hottest suns of India never heated his temper; and the Walcheren ague never shook it. He walked up to a battery with just as much indifference as to a dinner-table; had dined on horse-flesh and turtle with equal relish and appetite; and had an old mother, Mrs. O'Dowd of O'Dowdstown indeed, whom he had never disobeyed but when he ran away and enlisted, and when he persisted in marrying that odious Peggy Malony.

Peggy was one of five sisters, and eleven children of the noble house of Glenmalony; but her husband, though her own cousin, was of the mother's side, and so had not the inestimable advantage of being allied to the Malonys, whom she believed to be the most famous family in the world. Having tried nine seasons at Dublin and two at Bath and Cheltenham, and not finding a partner for life, Miss Malony ordered her cousin Mick to marry her when she was about thirty-three years of age; and the honest fellow obeying, carried her off to the West Indies, to preside over the ladies of the —th regiment, into which he had just exchanged.

Before Mrs. O'Dowd was half an hour in Amelia's (or indeed in anybody else's) company, this amiable lady told all her birth and pedigree to her new friend. "My dear," said she, good-naturedly, "it was my in-

tention that Garge should be a brother of my own, and my sister Glorvina would have suited him entirely. But as bygones are bygones, and he was engaged to yourself, why, I'm determined to take you as a sister instead, and to look upon you as such, and to love you as one of the family. Faith, you've got such a nice good-natured face and way wid you, that I'm sure we'll agree; and that you'll be an addition to our family anyway."

"'Deed and she will," said O'Dowd, with an approving air, and Amelia felt herself not a little amused and grateful to be thus suddenly introduced to so large a party of relations.

"We're all good fellows here," the Major's lady continued. "There's not a regiment in the service where you'll find a more united society nor a more agreeable mess-room. There's no quarrelling, bickering, slandthering, nor small talk amongst *us*. We all love each other."

"Especially Mrs. Magenis," said George, laughing.

"Mrs. Captain Magenis and me has made up, though her treatment of me would bring me gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

"And you with such a beautiful front of black, Peggy, my dear," the Major cried.

"Hould your tongue, Mick, you booby. Them husbands are always in the way, Mrs. Osborne, my dear; and as for my Mick, I often tell him he should never open his mouth but to give the word of command, or to put meat and drink into it. I'll tell you about the regiment, and warn you when we're alone. Introduce me to your brother now; sure he's a mighty fine man, and reminds me of me cousin, Dan Malony (Malony of Ballymalony, my dear, you know, who mar'ied Ophalia

Scully, of Oystherstown, own cousin to Lord Poldoody). Mr. Sedley, sir, I'm deloighted to be made known te ye. I suppose you'll dine at the mess to-day. (Mind that divvle of a docther, Mick, and whatever ye du, keep yourself sober for me party this evening.)"

"It's the 150th gives us a farewell dinner, my love," interposed the Major, "but we'll easy get a card for Mr. Sedley."

"Run, Simple (Ensign Simple, of Ours, my dear Amelia. I forgot to introjuice him to ye). Run in a hurry, with Mrs. Major O'Dowd's compliments to Colonel Tavish, and Captain Osborne has brought his brothernlaw down, and will bring him to the 150th mess at five o'clock sharp—when you and I, my dear, will take a snack here, if you like." Before Mrs. O'Dowd's speech was concluded, the young Ensign was trotting down stairs on his commission.

"Obedience is the soul of the army. We will go to our duty while Mrs. O'Dowd will stay and enlighten you, Emmy," Captain Osborne said; and the two gentlemen, taking each a wing of the Major, walked out with that officer, grinning at each other over his head.

And, now having her new friend to herself, the impetuous Mrs. O'Dowd proceeded to pour out such a quantity of information as no poor little woman's memory could ever tax itself to bear. She told Amelia a thousand particulars relative to the very numerous family of which the amazed young lady found herself a member. "Mrs. Heavytop, the Colonel's wife, died in Jamaica of the yellow faver and a broken heart comboined, for the horrud old Colonel, with a head as bald as a cannon-ball, was making sheep's eyes at a half-caste girl there. Mrs. Magenis, though without education,

was a good woman, but she had the divvle's tongue, and would cheat her own mother at whist. Mrs. Captain Kirk must turn up her lobster eyes forsooth at the idea of an honest round game, (wherein me fawther, as pious a man as ever went to church, me uncle Dane Malony, and our cousin the Bishop, took a hand at loo, or whist, every night of their lives). Nayther of 'em's goin' with the regiment this time," Mrs. O'Dowd added. "Fanny Magenis stops with her mother, who sells small coal and potatoes, most likely, in Islington-town, hard by London, though she's always bragging of her father's ships, and pointing them out to us as they go up the river: and Mrs. Kirk and her children will stop here in Bethesda Place, to be nigh to her favourite preacher, Dr. Ramshorn. Mrs. Bunny's in an interesting situation—faith, and she always is, then—and has given the Lieutenant seven already. And Ensign Posky's wife, who joined two months before you, my dear, has quarl'd with Tom Posky a score of times, till you can hear 'm all over the bar'ck (they say they're come to broken pleets, and Tom never accounted for his black oi), and she'll go back to her mother, who keeps a ladies' siminary at Richmond,—bad luck to her for running away from it! Where did ye get your finishing, my dear? I had moin, and no expince spared, at Madame Flanahan's, at Ilyssus Grove, Booterstown, near Dublin, wid a Marchioness to teach us the true Parisian pronunciation, and a retired Mejor-General of the French service to put us through the exercise."

Of this incongruous family our astonished Amelia found herself all of a sudden a member: with Mrs. O'Dowd as an elder sister. She was presented to her other female relations at tea-time, on whom, as she was

quiet, good-natured, and not too handsome, she made rather an agreeable impression until the arrival of the gentlemen from the mess of the 150th, who all admired her so, that her sisters began, of course, to find fault with her.

"I hope Osborne has sown his wild oats," said Mrs. Magenis to Mrs. Bunny. "If a reformed rake makes a good husband, sure it's she will have the fine chance with Garge," Mrs. O'Dowd remarked to Posky, who had lost her position as bride in the regiment, and was quite angry with the usurper. And as for Mrs. Kirk: that disciple of Dr. Ramshorn put one or two leading professional questions to Amelia, to see whether she was awakened, whether she was a professing Christian and so forth, and finding from the simplicity of Mrs. Osborne's replies that she was yet in utter darkness, put into her hands three little penny books with pictures, viz., the "Howling Wilderness," the "Washerwoman of Wandsworth Common," and the "British Soldier's best Bayonet," which, bent upon awakening her before she slept, Mrs. Kirk begged Amelia to read that night ere she went to bed.

But all the men, like good fellows as they were, rallied round their comrade's pretty wife, and paid her their court with soldierly gallantry. She had a little triumph, which flushed her spirits and made her eyes sparkle. George was proud of her popularity, and pleased with the manner (which was very gay and graceful, though naïve and a little timid) with which she received the gentlemen's attentions, and answered their compliments. And he in his uniform—how much handsomer he was than any man in the room! She felt

that he was affectionately watching her, and glowed with pleasure at his kindness. "I will make all his friends welcome," she resolved in her heart. "I will love all as I love him. I will always try and be gay and good-humoured and make his home happy."

The regiment indeed adopted her with acclamation. The Captains approved, the Lieutenants applauded, the Ensigns admired. Old Cutler, the Doctor, made one or two jokes, which, being professional, need not be repeated; and Cackle, the Assistant M.D. of Edinburgh, condescended to examine her upon leeterature, and tried her with his three best French quotations. Young Stubble went about from man to man whispering, "Jove, isn't she a pretty gal?" and never took his eyes off her except when the negus came in.

As for Captain Dobbin, he never so much as spoke to her during the whole evening. But he and Captain Porter of the 150th took home Jos to the hotel, who was in a very maudlin state, and had told his tiger-hunt story with great effect, both at the mess-table and at the *soirée*, to Mrs. O'Dowd in her turban and bird of paradise. Having put the Collector into the hands of his servant, Dobbin loitered about, smoking his cigar before the inn door. George had meanwhile very carefully shawled his wife, and brought her away from Mrs. O'Dowd's after a general handshaking from the young officers, who accompanied her to the fly, and cheered that vehicle as it drove off. So Amelia gave Dobbin her little hand as she got out of the carriage, and rebuked him smilingly for not having taken any notice of her all night.

The Captain continued that deleterious amusement of smoking long after the inn and the street were gone

to bed. He watched the lights vanish from George's sitting-room windows, and shine out in the bedroom close at hand. It was almost morning when he returned to his own quarters. He could hear the cheering from the ships in the river, where the transports were already taking in their cargoes preparatory to dropping down the Thames.

CHAPTER XXVIII

IN WHICH AMELIA INVADES THE LOW COUNTRIES

THE regiment with its officers was to be transported in ships provided by His Majesty's government for the occasion: and in two days after the festive assembly at Mrs. O'Dowd's apartments, in the midst of cheering from all the East India ships in the river, and the military on shore, the band playing "God save the King," the officers waving their hats, and the crews hurrahing gallantly, the transports went down the river and proceeded under convoy to Ostend. Meanwhile the gallant Jos had agreed to escort his sister and the Major's wife, the bulk of whose goods and chattels, including the famous bird of paradise and turban, were with the regimental baggage: so that our two heroines drove pretty much unencumbered to Ramsgate, where there were plenty of packets plying, in one of which they had a speedy passage to Ostend.

That period of Jos's life which now ensued was so

full of incident, that it served him for conversation for many years after, and even the tiger-hunt story was put aside for more stirring narratives which he had to tell about the great campaign of Waterloo. As soon as he had agreed to escort his sister abroad, it was remarked that he ceased shaving his upper lip. At Chatham he followed the parades and drills with great assiduity. He listened with the utmost attention to the conversation of his brother officers (as he called them in after days sometimes), and learned as many military names as he could. In these studies the excellent Mrs. O'Dowd was of great assistance to him; and on the day finally when they embarked on board the Lovely Rose, which was to carry them to their destination, he made his appearance in a braided frock-coat and duck trowsers, with a foraging cap ornamented with a smart gold band. Having his carriage with him, and informing everybody on board confidentially that he was going to join the Duke of Wellington's army, folks mistook him for a great personage, a commissary-general, or a government courier at the very least.

He suffered hugely on the voyage, during which the ladies were likewise prostrate; but Amelia was brought to life again as the packet made Ostend, by the sight of the transports conveying her regiment, which entered the harbour almost at the same time with the Lovely Rose. Jos went in a collapsed state to an inn, while Captain Dobbin escorted the ladies, and then busied himself in freeing Jos's carriage and luggage from the ship and the custom-house, for Mr. Jos was at present without a servant, Osborne's man and his own pampered menial having conspired together at Chatham, and refused point-blank to cross the water. This re-

volt, which came very suddenly, and on the last day, so alarmed Mr. Sedley, junior, that he was on the point of giving up the expedition, but Captain Dobbin (who made himself immensely officious in the business, Jos said,) rated him and laughed at him soundly: the moustachios were grown in advance, and Jos finally was persuaded to embark. In place of the well-bred and well-fed London domestics, who could only speak English, Dobbin procured for Jos's party a swarthy little Belgian servant who could speak no language at all; but who, by his bustling behaviour, and by invariably addressing Mr. Sedley as "My lord," speedily acquired that gentleman's favour. Times are altered at Ostend now; of the Britons who go thither, very few look like lords, or act like those members of our hereditary aristocracy. They seem for the most part shabby in attire, dingy of linen, lovers of billiards and brandy, and cigars and greasy ordinaries.

But it may be said as a rule, that every Englishman in the Duke of Wellington's army paid his way. The remembrance of such a fact surely becomes a nation of shopkeepers. It was a blessing for a commerce-loving country to be overrun by such an army of customers: and to have such creditable warriors to feed. And the country which they came to protect is not military. For a long period of history they have let other people fight there. When the present writer went to survey with eagle glance the field of Waterloo, we asked the conductor of the diligence, a portly warlike-looking veteran, whether he had been at the battle. "*Pas si bête*"—such an answer and sentiment as no Frenchman would own to—was his reply. But on the other hand, the postilion who drove us was a *Viscount*, a son of some bankrupt

imperial general, who accepted a pennyworth of beer on the road. The moral is surely a good one.

This flat, flourishing, easy country never could have looked more rich and prosperous than in that opening summer of 1815, when its green fields and quiet cities were enlivened by multiplied red-coats: when its wide *chaussées* swarmed with brilliant English equipages: when its great canal-boats, gliding by rich pastures and pleasant quaint old villages, by old châteaux lying amongst old trees, were all crowded with well-to-do English travellers: when the soldier who drank at the village inn, not only drank, but paid his score; and Donald, the Highlander,[1] billeted in the Flemish farmhouse, rocked the baby's cradle, while Jean and Jeannette were out getting in the hay. As our painters are bent on military subjects just now, I throw out this as a good subject for the pencil, to illustrate the principle of an honest English war. All looked as brilliant and harmless as a Hyde Park review. Meanwhile, Napolean screened behind his curtain of frontier-fortresses, was preparing for the outbreak which was to drive all these orderly people into fury and blood; and lay so many of them low.

Everybody had such a perfect feeling of confidence in the leader (for the resolute faith which the Duke of Wellington had inspired in the whole English nation was as intense, as that more frantic enthusiasm with which at one time the French regarded Napoleon), the country seemed in so perfect a state of orderly defence, and the help at hand in case of need so near and overwhelming, that alarm was unknown, and our travellers, among whom two were naturally of a very timid sort,

[1] This incident is mentioned in Mr. Gleig's "Story of the Battle of Waterloo."

were, like all the other multiplied English tourists, entirely at ease. The famous regiment, with so many of whose officers we have made acquaintance, was drafted in canal-boats to Bruges and Ghent, thence to march to Brussels. Jos accompanied the ladies in the public boats; the which all old travellers in Flanders must

remember for the luxury and accommodation they afforded. So prodigiously good was the eating and drinking on board these sluggish but most comfortable vessels, that there are legends extant of an English traveller, who, coming to Belgium for a week, and travelling in one of these boats, was so delighted with the fare there that he went backwards and forwards from Ghent to Bruges perpetually until the railroads were invented, when he drowned himself on the last trip of the passage-boat. Jos's death was not to be of this sort, but his comfort was exceeding, and Mrs. O'Dowd insisted

that he only wanted her sister Glorvina to make his happiness complete. He sate on the roof of the cabin all day drinking Flemish beer, shouting for Isidor, his servant, and talking gallantly to the ladies.

His courage was prodigious. "Boney attack *us!*" he cried. "My dear creature, my poor Emmy, don't be frightened. There's no danger. The allies will be in Paris in two months, I tell you; when I'll take you to dine in the Palais Royal, by Jove! There are three hundred thousand Rooshians, I tell you, now entering France by Mayence and the Rhine—three hundred thousand under Wittgenstein and Barclay de Tolly, my poor love. You don't know military affairs, my dear. I do, and I tell you there's no infantry in France can stand against Rooshian infantry, and no general of Boney's that's fit to hold a candle to Wittgenstein. Then there are the Austrians, they are five hundred thousand if a man, and they are within ten marches of the frontier by this time, under Schwartzenberg and Prince Charles. Then there are the Prooshians under the gallant Prince Marshal. Show me a cavalry chief like him now that Murat is gone. Hey, Mrs. O'Dowd? Do you think our little girl here need be afraid? Is there any cause for fear, Isidor? Hey, sir? Get some more beer."

Mrs. O'Dowd said that her "Glorvina was not afraid of any man alive, let alone a Frenchman," and tossed off a glass of beer with a wink which expressed her liking for the beverage.

Having frequently been in presence of the enemy, or, in other words, faced the ladies at Cheltenham and Bath, our friend, the Collector, had lost a great deal of his pristine timidity, and was now, especially when fortified with liquor, as talkative as might be. He was

rather a favourite with the regiment, treating the young officers with sumptuosity, and amusing them by his military airs. And as there is one well-known regiment of the army which travels with a goat heading the column, whilst another is led by a deer, George said with respect to his brother-in-law, that his regiment marched with an elephant.

Since Amelia's introduction to the regiment, George began to be rather ashamed of some of the company to which he had been forced to present her; and determined, as he told Dobbin (with what satisfaction to the latter it need not be said), to exchange into some better regiment soon, and to get his wife away from those damned vulgar women. But this vulgarity of being ashamed of one's society is much more common among men than women (except very great ladies of fashion, who, to be sure, indulge in it); and Mrs. Amelia, a natural and unaffected person, had none of that artificial shamefacedness which her husband mistook for delicacy on his own part. Thus Mrs. O'Dowd had a cock's plume in her hat, and a very large "repayther" on her stomach, which she used to ring on all occasions, narrating how it had been presented to her by her fawther, as she stipt into the car'ge after her mar'ge; and these ornaments, with other outward peculiarities of the Major's wife, gave excruciating agonies to Captain Osborne, when his wife and the Major's came in contact; whereas Amelia was only amused by the honest lady's eccentricities, and not in the least ashamed of her company.

As they made that well-known journey, which almost every Englishman of middle rank has travelled since, there might have been more instructive, but few more

entertaining, companions than Mrs. Major O'Dowd. "Talk about kenal boats, my dear! Ye should see the kenal boats between Dublin and Ballinasloe. It's there the rapid travelling is; and the beautiful cattle. Sure me fawther got a goold medal (and his Excellency himself eat a slice of it, and said never was finer mate in his loif) for a four-year-old heifer, the like of which ye never saw in *this* country any day." And Jos owned with a sigh, "that for good streaky beef, really mingled with fat and lean, there was no country like England."

"Except Ireland, where all your best mate comes from," said the Major's lady; proceeding, as is not unusual with patriots of her nation, to make comparisons greatly in favour of her own country. The idea of comparing the market at Bruges with those of Dublin, although she had suggested it herself, caused immense scorn and derision on her part. "I'll thank ye tell me what they mean by that old gazabo on the top of the market-place," said she, in a burst of ridicule fit to have brought the old tower down. The place was full of English soldiery as they passed. English bugles woke them in the morning; at night-fall they went to bed to the note of the British fife and drum: all the country and Europe was in arms, and the greatest event of history pending: and honest Peggy O'Dowd, whom it concerned as well as another, went on prattling about Ballinafad, and the horses in the stables at Glenmalony, and the clar't drunk there; and Jos Sedley interposed about curry and rice at Dumdum; and Amelia thought about her husband, and how best she should show her love for him; as if these were the great topics of the world.

Those who like to lay down the History-book, and to speculate upon what *might* have happened in the world, but for the fatal occurrence of what actually did take place (a most puzzling, amusing, ingenious, and profitable kind of meditation), have no doubt often thought to themselves what a specially bad time Napoleon took to come back from Elba, and to let loose his eagle from Gulf San Juan to Notre Dame. The historians on our side tell us that the armies of the allied powers were all providentially on a war-footing, and ready to bear down at a moment's notice upon the Elban emperor. The august jobbers assembled at Vienna, and carving out the kingdoms of Europe according to their wisdom, had such causes of quarrel among themselves as might have set the armies which had overcome Napoleon to fight against each other, but for the return of the object of unanimous hatred and fear. This monarch had an army in full force because he had jobbed to himself Poland, and was determined to keep it: another had robbed half Saxony, and was bent upon maintaining his acquisition: Italy was the object of a third's solicitude. Each was protesting against the rapacity of the other; and could the Corsican but have waited in prison until all these parties were by the ears, he might have returned and reigned unmolested. But what would have become of our story and all our friends, then? If all the drops in it were dried up, what would become of the sea?

In the meanwhile the business of life and living, and the pursuits of pleasure, especially, went on as if no end were to be expected to them, and no enemy in front. When our travellers arrived at Brussels, in which their regiment was quartered, a great piece of good fortune,

as all said, they found themselves in one of the gayest and most brilliant little capitals in Europe, and where all the Vanity Fair booths were laid out with the most tempting liveliness and splendour. Gambling was here in profusion, and dancing in plenty: feasting was there to fill with delight that great gourmand of a Jos: there was a theatre where a miraculous Catalani was delighting all hearers: beautiful rides, all enlivened with martial splendour; a rare old city, with strange costumes and wonderful architecture, to delight the eyes of little Amelia, who had never before seen a foreign country, and fill her with charming surprises: so that now and for a few weeks' space in a fine handsome lodging, whereof the expenses were borne by Jos and Osborne, who was flush of money and full of kind attentions to his wife—for about a fortnight, I say, during which her honeymoon ended, Mrs. Amelia was as pleased and happy as any little bride out of England.

Every day during this happy time there was novelty and amusement for all parties. There was a church to see, or a picture-gallery—there was a ride, or an opera. The bands of the regiments were making music at all hours. The greatest folks of England walked in the park—there was a perpetual military festival. George, taking out his wife to a new jaunt or junket every night, was quite pleased with himself as usual, and swore he was becoming quite a domestic character. And a jaunt or a junket with *him!* Was it not enough to set this little heart beating with joy? Her letters home to her mother were filled with delight and gratitude at this season. Her husband bade her buy laces, millinery, jewels, and gimcracks of all sorts. Oh, he was the kindest, best, and most generous of men!

The sight of the very great company of lords and ladies and fashionable persons who thronged the town, and appeared in every public place, filled George's truly British soul with intense delight. They flung off that happy frigidity and insolence of demeanour which occasionally characterises the great at home, and appearing in numberless public places, condescended to mingle with the rest of the company whom they met there. One night at a party given by the general of the division to which George's regiment belonged, he had the honour of dancing with Lady Blanche Thistlewood, Lord Bareacres' daughter; he bustled for ices and refreshments for the two noble ladies; he pushed and squeezed for Lady Bareacres' carriage; he bragged about the countess when he got home, in a way which his own father could not have surpassed. He called upon the ladies the next day; he rode by their side in the park; he asked their party to a great dinner at a restaurateur's, and was quite wild with exultation when they agreed to come. Old Bareacres, who had not much pride and a large appetite, would go for a dinner anywhere.

"I hope there will be no women besides our own party," Lady Bareacres said, after reflecting upon the invitation which had been made, and accepted with too much precipitancy.

"Gracious Heaven, mamma—you don't suppose the man would bring his wife," shrieked Lady Blanche, who had been languishing in George's arms in the newly-imported waltz for hours the night before. "The men are bearable, but their women—"

"Wife, just married, dev'lish pretty woman, I hear," the old Earl said.

"Well, my dear Blanche," said the mother, "I sup-

pose, as papa wants to go, we must go; but we needn't know them in England, you know." And so, determined to cut their new acquaintance in Bond Street, these great folks went to eat his dinner at Brussels, and condescending to make him pay for their pleasure, showed their dignity by making his wife uncomfortable, and carefully excluding her from the conversation. This is a species of dignity in which the high-bred British female reigns supreme. To watch the behaviour of a fine lady to other and humbler women, is a very good sport for a philosophical frequenter of Vanity Fair.

This festival, on which honest George spent a great deal of money, was the very dismallest of all the entertainments which Amelia had in her honeymoon. She wrote the most piteous accounts of the feast home to her mamma: how the Countess of Bareacres would not answer when spoken to; how Lady Blanche stared at her with her eye-glass; and what a rage Captain Dobbin was in at their behaviour; and how my lord, as they came away from the feast, asked to see the bill, and pronounced it a d— bad dinner, and d— dear. But though Amelia told all these stories, and wrote home regarding her guests' rudeness, and her own discomfiture, old Mrs. Sedley was mightily pleased nevertheless, and talked about Emmy's friend, the Countess of Bareacres, with such assiduity that the news how his son was entertaining peers and peeresses actually came to Osborne's ears in the City.

Those who know the present Lieutenant-General Sir George Tufto, K.C.B., and have seen him, as they may on most days in the season, padded and in stays, strutting down Pall Mall with a rickety swagger on his

high-heeled lacquered boots, leering under the bonnets of passers-by, or riding a showy chestnut, and ogling broughams in the Parks—those who know the present Sir George Tufto would hardly recognise the daring Peninsular and Waterloo officer. He has thick curling brown hair and black eyebrows now, and his whiskers are of the deepest purple. He was light-haired and bald in 1815, and stouter in the person and in the limbs, which especially have shrunk very much of late. When he was about seventy years of age (he is now nearly eighty), his hair, which was very scarce and quite white, suddenly grew thick, and brown, and curly, and his whiskers and eyebrows took their present colour. Ill-natured people say that his chest is all wool, and that his hair, because it never grows, is a wig. Tom Tufto, with whose father he quarrelled ever so many years ago, declares that Mademoiselle de Jaisey, of the French theatre, pulled his grandpapa's hair off in the green-room; but Tom is notoriously spiteful and jealous; and the General's wig has nothing to do with our story.

One day, as some of our friends of the —th were sauntering in the flower-market of Brussels, having been to see the Hôtel de Ville, which Mrs. Major O'Dowd declared was not near so large or handsome as her fawther's mansion of Glenmalony, an officer of rank, with an orderly behind him, rode up to the market, and descending from his horse, came amongst the flowers, and selected the very finest bouquet which money could buy. The beautiful bundle being tied up in a paper, the officer remounted, giving the nosegay into the charge of his military groom, who carried it

with a grin, following his chief, who rode away in great state and self-satisfaction.

"You should see the flowers at Glenmalony," Mrs. O'Dowd was remarking. "Me fawther has three Scotch garners with nine helpers. We have an acre of hothouses, and pines as common as pays in the sayson. Our greeps weighs six pounds every bunch of 'em, and upon me honour and conscience I think our magnolias is as big as taykettles."

Dobbin, who never used to "draw out" Mrs. O'Dowd as that wicked Osborne delighted in doing (much to Amelia's terror, who implored him to spare her), fell back in the crowd, crowing and sputtering until he reached a safe distance, when he exploded amongst the astonished market-people with shrieks of yelling laughter.

"Hwhat's that gawky guggling about?" said Mrs. O'Dowd. "Is it his nose bleedn? He always used to say 'twas his nose bleedn, till he must have pomped all the blood out of 'um. An't the magnolias at Glenmalony as big as taykettles, O'Dowd?"

"Deed then they are, and bigger, Peggy," the Major said. When the conversation was interrupted in the manner stated by the arrival of the officer who purchased the bouquet.

"Devilish fine horse,—who is it?" George asked.

"You should see me brother Molloy Malony's horse, Molasses, that won the cop at the Curragh," the Major's wife was exclaiming, and was continuing the family history, when her husband interrupted her by saying—

"It's General Tufto, who commands the —— cav-

Mrs. O'Dowd at the
Flower Market

alry division;" adding quietly, "he and I were both shot in the same leg at Talavera."

"Where you got your step," said George with a laugh. "General Tufto! Then, my dear, the Crawleys are come."

Amelia's heart fell,—she knew not why. The sun did not seem to shine so bright. The tall old roofs and gables looked less picturesque all of a sudden, though it was a brilliant sunset, and one of the brightest and most beautiful days at the end of May.

CHAPTER XXIX

BRUSSELS

MR. JOS had hired a pair of horses for his open carriage, with which cattle, and the smart London vehicle, he made a very tolerable figure in the drives about Brussels. George purchased a horse for his private riding, and he and Captain Dobbin would often accompany the carriage in which Jos and his sister took daily excursions of pleasure. They went out that day in the park for their accustomed diversion, and there, sure enough, George's remark with regard to the arrival of Rawdon Crawley and his wife proved to be correct. In the midst of a little troop of horsemen, consisting of some of the very greatest persons in Brussels, Rebecca was seen in the prettiest and tightest of riding-habits, mounted on a beautiful little Arab, which she rode to perfection (having acquired the art at Queen's Crawley, where the Baronet, Mr. Pitt, and Rawdon himself had given her many lessons), and by the side of the gallant General Tufto.

"Sure it's the Juke himself," cried Mrs. Major O'Dowd to Jos, who began to blush violently; "and that's Lord Uxbridge on the bay. How elegant he

looks! Me brother, Molloy Malony, is as like him as two peas."

Rebecca did not make for the carriage; but as soon as she perceived her old acquaintance Amelia seated in it, acknowledged her presence by a gracious word and smile, and by kissing and shaking her fingers playfully in the direction of the vehicle. Then she resumed her conversation with General Tufto, who asked "who the fat officer was in the gold-laced cap?" on which Becky replied, "that he was an officer in the East Indian service." But Rawdon Crawley rode out of the ranks of his company, and came up and shook hands heartily with Amelia, and said to Jos, "Well, old boy, how are you?" and stared in Mrs. O'Dowd's face and at the black cock's feathers until she began to think she had made a conquest of him.

George, who had been delayed behind, rode up almost immediately with Dobbin, and they touched their caps to the august personages, among whom Osborne at once perceived Mrs. Crawley. He was delighted to see Rawdon leaning over his carriage familiarly and talking to Amelia, and met the aide-de-camp's cordial greeting with more than corresponding warmth. The nods between Rawdon and Dobbin were of the very faintest specimens of politeness.

Crawley told George where they were stopping with General Tufto at the Hôtel du Parc, and George made his friend promise to come speedily to Osborne's own residence. "Sorry I hadn't seen you three days ago," George said. "Had a dinner at the Restaurateur's—rather a nice thing. Lord Bareacres, and the Countess, and Lady Blanche, were good enough to dine with us—wish we'd had you." Having thus let his friend know

his claims to be a man of fashion, Osborne parted from Rawdon, who followed the august squadron down an alley into which they cantered, while George and Dobbin resumed their places, one on each side of Amelia's carriage.

"How well the Juke looked," Mrs. O'Dowd remarked. "The Wellesleys and Malonys are related; but, of course, poor *I* would never dream of introjuicing myself unless his Grace thought proper to remember our family-tie."

"He's a great soldier," Jos said, much more at ease now the great man was gone. "Was there ever a battle won like Salamanca? Hey, Dobbin? But where was it he learnt his art? In India, my boy! The jungle's the school for a general, mark me that. I knew him myself, too, Mrs. O'Dowd: we both of us danced the same evening with Miss Cutler, daughter of Cutler of the Artillery, and a devilish fine girl, at Dumdum."

The apparition of the great personages held them all in talk during the drive; and at dinner; and until the hour came when they were all to go to the Opera.

It was almost like Old England. The house was filled with familiar British faces, and those toilettes for which the British female has long been celebrated. Mrs. O'Dowd's was not the least splendid amongst these, and she had a curl on her forehead, and a set of Irish diamonds and Cairngorms, which outshone all the decorations in the house, in her notion. Her presence used to excruciate Osborne; but go she would upon all parties of pleasure on which she heard her young friends were bent. It never entered into her thought but that they must be charmed with her company.

"She's been useful to you, my dear," George said to

his wife, whom he could leave alone with less scruple when she had this society. "But what a comfort it is that Rebecca's come: you will have her for a friend, and we may get rid now of this damn'd Irishwoman." To this Amelia did not answer, yes or no: and how do we know what her thoughts were?

The *coup-d'œil* of the Brussels opera-house did not strike Mrs. O'Dowd as being so fine as the theatre in Fishamble Street, Dublin, nor was French music at all equal, in her opinion, to the melodies of her native country. She favoured her friends with these and other opinions in a very loud tone of voice, and tossed about a great clattering fan she sported, with the most splendid complacency.

"Who is that wonderful woman with Amelia, Rawdon, love?" said a lady in an opposite box (who, almost always civil to her husband in private, was more fond than ever of him in company).

"Don't you see that creature with a yellow thing in her turban, and a red satin gown, and a great watch?"

"Near the pretty little woman in white?" asked a middle-aged gentleman seated by the querist's side, with orders in his button, and several under-waistcoats, and a great, choky, white stock.

"That pretty woman in white is Amelia, General: you are remarking all the pretty women, you naughty man."

"Only one, begad, in the world!" said the General, delighted, and the lady gave him a tap with a large bouquet which she had.

"Bedad it's him," said Mrs. O'Dowd; "and that's the very bokay he bought in the Marshy aux Flures!" and when Rebecca, having caught her friend's eye, performed the little hand-kissing operation once more, Mrs. Major O'D., taking the compliment to herself, returned the salute with a gracious smile, which sent that unfortunate Dobbin shrieking out of the box again.

At the end of the act, George was out of the box in a moment, and he was even going to pay his respects to Rebecca in her *loge*. He met Crawley in the lobby, however, where they exchanged a few sentences upon the occurrences of the last fortnight.

"You found my cheque all right at the agent's?" George said, with a knowing air.

"All right, my boy," Rawdon answered. "Happy to give you your revenge. Governor come round?"

"Not yet," said George, "but he will; and you know

I've some private fortune through my mother. Has Aunty relented?"

"Sent me twenty pound, damned old screw. When shall we have a meet? The General dines out on Tuesday. Can't you come Tuesday? I say, make Sedley cut off his moustache. What the devil does a civilian mean with a moustache and those infernal frogs to his coat! By-bye. Try and come on Tuesday;" and Rawdon was going off with two brilliant young gentlemen of fashion, who were, like himself, on the staff of a general officer.

George was only half pleased to be asked to dinner on that particular day when the General was *not* to dine. "I will go in and pay my respects to your wife," said he; at which Rawdon said, "H'm, as you please," looking very glum, and at which the two young officers exchanged knowing glances. George parted from them, and strutted down the lobby to the General's box, the number of which he had carefully counted.

"*Entrez,*" said a clear little voice, and our friend found himself in Rebecca's presence; who jumped up, clapped her hands together, and held out both of them to George, so charmed was she to see him. The General, with the orders in his button, stared at the new comer with a sulky scowl, as much as to say, who the devil are you?

"My dear Captain George!" cried little Rebecca in an ecstacy. "How good of you to come. The General and I were moping together *tête-à-tête*. General, this is my Captain George of whom you heard me talk."

"Indeed," said the General, with a very small bow, "of what regiment is Captain George?"

George mentioned the —th: how he wished he could have said it was a crack cavalry corps.

"Come home lately from the West Indies, I believe. Not seen much service in the late war. Quartered here, Captain George?"—the General went on with killing haughtiness.

"Not Captain George, you stupid man; Captain Osborne," Rebecca said. The General all the while was looking savagely from one to the other.

"Captain Osborne, indeed! Any relation to the L— Osbornes?"

"We bear the same arms," George said, as indeed was the fact; Mr. Osborne having consulted with a herald in Long Acre, and picked the L— arms out of the peerage, when he set up his carriage fifteen years before. The General made no reply to this announcement; but took up his opera-glass—the double-barrelled lorgnon was not invented in those days—and pretended to examine the house; but Rebecca saw that his disengaged eye was working round in her direction, and shooting out blood-shot glances at her and George.

She redoubled in cordiality. "How is dearest Amelia? But I needn't ask: how pretty she looks! And who is that nice good-natured looking creature with her—a flame of yours? O, you wicked men! And there is Mr. Sedley eating ice, I declare: how he seems to enjoy it! General, why have we not had any ices?"

"Shall I go and fetch you some?" said the General, bursting with wrath.

"Let *me* go, I entreat you," George said.

"No, I will go to Amelia's box. Dear, sweet girl! Give me your arm, Captain George;" and so saying, and with a nod to the General, she tripped into the lobby.

She gave George the queerest, knowingest look, when they were together, a look which might have been interpreted, "Don't you see the state of affairs, and what a fool I'm making of him?" But he did not perceive it. He was thinking of his own plans, and lost in pompous admiration of his own irresistible powers of pleasing.

The curses to which the General gave a low utterance, as soon as Rebecca and her conqueror had quitted him, were so deep, that I am sure no compositor would venture to print them were they written down. They came from the General's heart; and a wonderful thing it is to think that the human heart is capable of generating such produce, and can throw out, as occasion demands, such a supply of lust and fury, rage and hatred.

Amelia's gentle eyes, too, had been fixed anxiously on the pair whose conduct had so chafed the jealous General; but when Rebecca entered her box, she flew to her friend with an affectionate rapture which showed itself, in spite of the publicity of the place; for she embraced her dearest friend in the presence of the whole house, at least in full view of the General's glass, now brought to bear upon the Osborne party. Mrs. Rawdon saluted Jos, too, with the kindliest greeting: she admired Mrs. O'Dowd's large Cairngorm brooch and superb Irish diamonds, and wouldn't believe that they were not from Golconda direct. She bustled, she chattered, she turned and twisted, and smiled upon one, and smirked on another, all in full view of the jealous opera-glass opposite. And when the time for the ballet came (in which there was no dancer that went through her grimaces or performed her comedy of action better), she skipped back to her own box, leaning on Captain Dobbin's arm this

time. No, she would not have George's: he must stay and talk to his dearest, best, little Amelia.

"What a humbug that woman is," honest old Dobbin mumbled to George, when he came back from Rebecca's box, whither he had conducted her in perfect silence, and with a countenance as glum as an undertaker's. "She writhes and twists about like a snake. All the time she was here, didn't you see, George, how she was acting at the General over the way?"

"Humbug—acting! Hang it, she's the nicest little woman in England," George replied, showing his white teeth, and giving his ambrosial whiskers a twirl. "You ain't a man of the world, Dobbin. Dammy, look at her now, she's talked over Tufto in no time. Look how he's laughing! Gad, what a shoulder she has! Emmy, why didn't you have a bouquet? Everybody has a bouquet."

"Faith, then, why didn't you *boy* one?" Mrs. O'Dowd said; and both Amelia and William Dobbin thanked her for this timely observation. But beyond this neither of the ladies rallied. Amelia was overpowered by the flash and the dazzle and the fashionable talk of her worldly rival. Even the O'Dowd was silent and subdued after Becky's brilliant apparition, and scarcely said a word more about Glenmalony all the evening.

"When do you intend to give up play, George, as you have promised me, any time these hundred years?" Dobbin said to his friend a few days after the night at the Opera. "When do you intend to give up sermonising?" was the other's reply. "What the deuce, man, are you alarmed about? We play low; I won last night. You don't suppose Crawley cheats? With fair play it comes to pretty much the same thing at the year's end."

"But I don't think he could pay if he lost," Dobbin said; and his advice met with the success which advice usually commands. Osborne and Crawley were repeatedly together now. General Tufto dined abroad almost constantly. George was always welcome in the apartments (very close indeed to those of the General) which the Aide-de-camp and his wife occupied in the hotel.

Amelia's manners were such when she and George visited Crawley and his wife at these quarters, that they had very nearly come to their first quarrel; that is, George scolded his wife violently for her evident unwillingness to go, and the high and mighty manner in which she comported herself towards Mrs. Crawley, her old friend; and Amelia did not say one single word in reply; but with her husband's eye upon her, and Rebecca scanning her as she felt, was, if possible, more bashful and awkward on the second visit which she paid to Mrs. Rawdon, than on her first call.

Rebecca was doubly affectionate, of course, and would not take notice, in the least, of her friend's coolness. "I think Emmy has become prouder since her father's name was in the —, since Mr. Sedley's *misfortunes*," Rebecca said, softening the phrase charitably for George's ear.

"Upon my word, I thought when we were at Brighton she was doing me the honour to be jealous of me; and now I suppose she is scandalised because Rawdon, and I, and the General live together. Why, my dear creature, how could we, with our means, live at all, but for a friend to share expenses? And do you suppose that Rawdon is not big enough to take care of my honour? But I'm very much obliged to Emmy, very," Mrs. Rawdon said.

"Pooh, jealousy!" answered George, "all women are jealous."

"And all men too. Weren't you jealous of General Tufto, and the General of you on the night of the Opera? Why, he was ready to eat me for going with you to visit that foolish little wife of yours; as if I care a pin for either of you," Crawley's wife said, with a pert toss of her head. "Will you dine here? The dragon dines with the Commander-in-Chief. Great news is stirring. They say the French have crossed the frontier. We shall have a quiet dinner."

George accepted the invitation, although his wife was a little ailing. They were not quite six weeks married. Another woman was laughing or sneering at her expense, and he not angry. He was not even angry with himself, this good-natured fellow. It is a shame, he owned to himself; but hang it, if a pretty woman *will* throw herself in your way, why, what can a fellow do, you know? I *am* rather free about women, he had often said, smiling and nodding knowingly to Stubble and Spooney, and other comrades of the mess-table; and they rather respected him than otherwise for this prowess. Next to conquering in war, conquering in love has been a source of pride, time out of mind, amongst men in Vanity Fair, or how should school-boys brag of their amours, or Don Juan be popular?

So Mr. Osborne, having a firm conviction in his own mind that he was a woman-killer and destined to conquer, did not run counter to his fate, but yielded himself up to it quite complacently. And as Emmy did not say much or plague him with her jealousy, but merely became unhappy and pined over it miserably in secret, he chose to fancy that she was not suspicious of

what all his acquaintance were perfectly aware—namely, that he was carrying on a desperate flirtation with Mrs. Crawley. He rode with her whenever she was free. He pretended regimental business to Amelia (by which falsehood she was not in the least deceived), and consigning his wife to solitude or her brother's society, passed his evenings in the Crawleys' company; losing money to the husband and flattering himself that the wife was dying of love for him. It is very likely that this worthy couple never absolutely conspired and agreed together in so many words: the one to cajole the young gentleman, whilst the other won his money at cards: but they understood each other perfectly well, and Rawdon let Osborne come and go with entire good humour.

George was so occupied with his new acquaintances that he and William Dobbin were by no means so much together as formerly. George avoided him in public and in the regiment, and, as we see, did not like those sermons which his senior was disposed to inflict upon him. If some parts of his conduct made Captain Dobbin exceedingly grave and cool; of what use was it to tell George that though his whiskers were large, and his own opinion of his knowingness great, he was as green as a school-boy? that Rawdon was making a victim of him as he had done of many before, and as soon as he had used him would fling him off with scorn? He would not listen: and so, as Dobbin, upon those days when he visited the Osborne house, seldom had the advantage of meeting his old friend, much painful and unavailing talk between them was spared. Our friend George was in the full career of the pleasures of Vanity Fair.

There never was, since the days of Darius, such a brilliant train of camp-followers as hung round the train of the Duke of Wellington's army in the Low Countries, in 1815; and led it dancing and feasting, as it were, up to the very brink of battle. A certain ball which a noble Duchess gave at Brussels on the 15th of June in the above-named year is historical. All Brussels had been in a state of excitement about it, and I have heard from ladies who were in that town at the period, that the talk and interest of persons of their own sex regarding the ball was much greater even than in respect of the enemy in their front. The struggles, intrigues, and prayers to get tickets were such as only English ladies will employ, in order to gain admission to the society of the great of their own nation.

Jos and Mrs. O'Dowd, who were panting to be asked, strove in vain to procure tickets; but others of our friends were more lucky. For instance, through the interest of my Lord Bareacres, and as a set-off for the dinner at the restaurateur's, George got a card for Captain and Mrs. Osborne; which circumstance greatly elated him. Dobbin, who was a friend of the General commanding the division in which their regiment was, came laughing one day to Mrs. Osborne, and displayed a similar invitation, which made Jos envious, and George wonder how the deuce *he* should be getting into society. Mr. and Mrs. Rawdon, finally, were of course invited; as became the friends of a General commanding a cavalry brigade.

On the appointed night, George, having commanded new dresses and ornaments of all sorts for Amelia, drove to the famous ball, where his wife did not know a single soul. After looking about for Lady Bareacres, who cut

him, thinking the card was quite enough—and after placing Amelia on a bench, he left her to her own cogitations there, thinking, on his own part, that he had behaved very handsomely in getting her new clothes, and bringing her to the ball, where she was free to amuse herself as she liked. Her thoughts were not of the pleasantest, and nobody except honest Dobbin came to disturb them.

Whilst her appearance was an utter failure (as her husband felt with a sort of rage), Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's *début* was, on the contrary, very brilliant. She arrived very late. Her face was radiant; her dress perfection. In the midst of the great persons assembled, and the eye-glasses directed to her, Rebecca seemed to be as cool and collected as when she used to marshal Miss Pinkerton's little girls to church. Numbers of the men she knew already, and the dandies thronged round her. As for the ladies, it was whispered among them that Rawdon had run away with her from out of a convent, and that she was a relation of the Montmorency family. She spoke French so perfectly that there might be some truth in this report, and it was agreed that her manners were fine, and her air *distinguée*. Fifty would-be partners thronged round her at once, and pressed to have the honour to dance with her. But she said she was engaged, and only going to dance very little; and made her way at once to the place where Emmy sate quite unnoticed, and dismally unhappy. And so, to finish the poor child at once, Mrs. Rawdon ran and greeted affectionately her dearest Amelia, and began forthwith to patronise her. She found fault with her friend's dress, and her hair-dresser, and wondered how she could be so *chaussée*, and vowed that she must send

her *corsetière* the next morning. She vowed that it was a delightful ball; that there was everybody that every one knew, and only a *very* few nobodies in the whole room. It is a fact, that in a fortnight, and after three dinners in general society, this young woman had got up the genteel jargon so well, that a native could not speak it better; and it was only from her French being so good, that you could know she was not a born woman of fashion.

George, who had left Emmy on her bench on entering the ball-room, very soon found his way back when Rebecca was by her dear friend's side. Becky was just lecturing Mrs. Osborne upon the follies which her husband was committing. "For God's sake, stop him from gambling, my dear," she said, "or he will ruin himself. He and Rawdon are playing at cards every night, and you know he is very poor, and Rawdon will win every shilling from him if he does not take care. Why don't you prevent him, you little careless creature? Why don't you come to us of an evening, instead of moping at home with that Captain Dobbin? I dare say he is *très aimable;* but how could one love a man with feet of such size? Your husband's feet are darlings—Here he comes. Where have you been, wretch? Here is Emmy crying her eyes out for you. Are you coming to fetch me for the quadrille?" And she left her bouquet and shawl by Amelia's side, and tripped off with George to dance. Women only know how to wound so. There is a poison on the tips of their little shafts, which stings a thousand times more than a man's blunter weapon. Our poor Emmy, who had never hated, never sneered all her life, was powerless in the hands of her remorseless little enemy.

George danced with Rebecca twice or thrice—how many times Amelia scarcely knew. She sate quite unnoticed in her corner, except when Rawdon came up with some words of clumsy conversation: and later in the evening, when Captain Dobbin made so bold as to bring her refreshments and sit beside her. He did not like to ask her why she was so sad; but as a pretext for the tears which were filling in her eyes, she told him that Mrs. Crawley had alarmed her by telling her that George would go on playing.

"It is curious, when a man is bent upon play, by what clumsy rogues he will allow himself to be cheated," Dobbin said; and Emmy said, "Indeed." She was thinking of something else. It was not the loss of the money that grieved her.

At last George came back for Rebecca's shawl and flowers. She was going away. She did not even condescend to come back and say good-bye to Amelia. The poor girl let her husband come and go without saying a word, and her head fell on her breast. Dobbin had been called away, and was whispering deep in conversation with the General of the division, his friend, and had not seen this last parting. George went away then with the bouquet; but when he gave it to the owner, there lay a note, coiled like a snake among the flowers. Rebecca's eye caught it at once. She had been used to deal with notes in early life. She put out her hand and took the nosegay. He saw by her eyes as they met, that she was aware what she should find there. Her husband hurried her away, still too intent upon his own thoughts, seemingly, to take note of any marks of recognition which might pass between his friend and his wife. These were, however, but trifling. Rebecca gave George her hand

with one of her usual quick knowing glances, and made a curtsey and walked away. George bowed over the hand, said nothing in reply to a remark of Crawley's, did not hear it even, his brain was so throbbing with triumph and excitement, and allowed them to go away without a word.

His wife saw the one part at least of the bouquet-scene. It was quite natural that George should come at Rebecca's request to get her her scarf and flowers: it was no more than he had done twenty times before in the course of the last few days; but now it was too much for her. "William," she said, suddenly clinging to Dobbin, who was near her, "you've always been very kind to me—I'm—I'm not well. Take me home." She did not know she called him by his Christian name, as George was accustomed to do. He went away with her quickly. Her lodgings were hard by; and they threaded through the crowd without, where everything seemed to be more astir than even in the ball-room within.

George had been angry twice or thrice at finding his wife up on his return from the parties which he frequented: so she went straight to bed now; but although she did not sleep, and although the din and clatter, and the galloping of horsemen was incessant, she never heard any of these noises, having quite other disturbances to keep her awake.

Osborne meanwhile, wild with elation, went off to a play-table, and began to bet frantically. He won repeatedly. "Everything succeeds with me to-night," he said. But his luck at play even did not cure him of his restlessness, and he started up after a while, pocketing his winnings, and went to a buffet, where he drank off many bumpers of wine.

Mrs. Osborne's carriage
stopping the way

Here, as he was rattling away to the people around, laughing loudly and wild with spirits, Dobbin found him. He had been to the card-tables to look there for his friend. Dobbin looked as pale and grave as his comrade was flushed and jovial.

"Hullo, Dob! Come and drink, old Dob! The Duke's wine is famous. Give me some more, you sir;" and he held out a trembling glass for the liquor.

"Come out, George," said Dobbin, still gravely; "don't drink."

"Drink! there's nothing like it. Drink yourself, and light up your lantern jaws, old boy. Here's to you."

Dobbin went up and whispered something to him, at which George, giving a start and a wild hurray, tossed off his glass, clapped it on the table, and walked away speedily on his friend's arm. "The enemy has passed the Sambre," William said, "and our left is already engaged. Come away. We are to march in three hours."

Away went George, his nerves quivering with excitement at the news so long looked for, so sudden when it came. What were love and intrigue now? He thought about a thousand things but these in his rapid walk to his quarters—his past life and future chances—the fate which might be before him—the wife, the child perhaps, from whom unseen he might be about to part. Oh, how he wished that night's work undone! and that with a clear conscience at least he might say farewell to the tender and guileless being by whose love he had set such little store!

He thought over his brief married life. In those few weeks he had frightfully dissipated his little capital.

How wild and reckless he had been! Should any mischance befal him: what was then left for her? How unworthy he was of her. Why had he married her? He was not fit for marriage. Why had he disobeyed his father, who had been always so generous to him? Hope, remorse, ambition, tenderness, and selfish regret filled his heart. He sate down and wrote to his father, remembering what he had said once before when he was engaged to fight a duel. Dawn faintly streaked the sky as he closed this farewell letter. He sealed it, and kissed the superscription. He thought how he had deserted that generous father, and of the thousand kindnesses which the stern old man had done him.

He had looked into Amelia's bed-room when he entered; she lay quiet, and her eyes seemed closed, and he was glad that she was asleep. On arriving at his quarters from the ball, he had found his regimental servant already making preparations for his departure: the man had understood his signal to be still, and these arrangements were very quickly and silently made. Should he go in and wake Amelia, he thought, or leave a note for her brother to break the news of departure to her? He went in to look at her once again.

She had been awake when he first entered her room, but had kept her eyes closed, so that even her wakefulness should not seem to reproach him. But when he had returned, so soon after herself, too, this timid little heart had felt more at ease, and turning towards him as he stept softly out of the room, she had fallen into a light sleep. George came in and looked at her again, entering still more softly. By the pale night-lamp he could see her sweet, pale face—the purple eyelids were fringed and closed, and one round arm, smooth and white, lay

outside of the coverlet. Good God! how pure she was; how gentle, how tender, and how friendless! and he, how selfish, brutal, and black with crime! Heart-stained, and shame-stricken, he stood at the bed's foot, and looked at the sleeping girl. How dared he—who was he, to pray for one so spotless! God bless her! God bless her! He came to the bed-side, and looked at the hand, the little soft hand, lying asleep; and he bent over the pillow noiselessly towards the gentle pale face.

Two fair arms closed tenderly round his neck as he stooped down. "I am awake, George," the poor child said, with a sob fit to break the little heart that nestled so closely by his own. She was awake, poor soul, and to what? At that moment a bugle from the Place of Arms began sounding clearly, and was taken up through the town; and amidst the drums of the infantry, and the shrill pipes of the Scotch, the whole city awoke.

CHAPTER XXX

"THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME"

WE do not claim to rank among the military novelists. Our place is with the non-combatants. When the decks are cleared for action we go below and wait meekly. We should only be in the way of the manœuvres that the gallant fellows are performing over head. We shall go no farther with the —th than to the city gate: and leaving Major O'Dowd to his duty, come back to the Major's wife, and the ladies and the baggage.

Now, the Major and his lady, who had not been invited to the ball at which in our last chapter other of our friends figured, had much more time to take their wholesome natural rest in bed, than was accorded to people who wished to enjoy pleasure as well as to do duty. "It's my belief, Peggy, my dear," said he, as he placidly pulled his night-cap over his ears, "that there will be such a ball danced in a day or two as some of 'em has never heard the chune of;" and he was much more happy to retire to rest after partaking of a quiet tumbler, than to figure at any other sort of amusement. Peggy, for her part, would have liked to have shown her turban and bird of paradise at the ball, but for the information which

Venus preparing the
armour of Mars

her husband had given her, and which made her very grave.

" I'd like ye wake me about half an hour before the assembly beats," the Major said to his lady. " Call me at half-past one, Peggy dear, and see me things is ready. May be I'll not come back to breakfast, Mrs. O'D." With which words, which signified his opinion that the regiment would march the next morning, the Major ceased talking, and fell asleep.

Mrs. O'Dowd, the good housewife, arrayed in curl-papers and a camisole, felt that her duty was to act, and not to sleep, at this juncture. " Time enough for that," she said, " when Mick's gone; " and so she packed his travelling valise ready for the march, brushed his cloak, his cap, and other warlike habiliments, set them out in order for him; and stowed away in the cloak pockets a light package of portable refreshments, and a wicker-covered flask or pocket-pistol, containing near a pint of a remarkably sound Cognac brandy, of which she and the Major approved very much; and as soon as the hands of the " repayther " pointed to half-past one, and its interior arrangements (it had a tone quite equal to a cathaydral, its fair owner considered) knelled forth that fatal hour, Mrs. O'Dowd woke up her Major, and had as comfortable a cup of coffee prepared for him as any made that morning in Brussels. And who is there will deny that this worthy lady's preparations betokened affection as much as the fits of tears and hysterics by which more sensitive females exhibited their love, and that their partaking of this coffee, which they drank together while the bugles were sounding the turn-out and the drums beating in the various quarters of the town, was not more useful and to the purpose than the out-

pouring of any mere sentiment could be? The consequence was, that the Major appeared on parade quite trim, fresh, and alert, his well-shaved rosy countenance, as he sate on horseback, giving cheerfulness and confidence to the whole corps. All the officers saluted her when the regiment marched by the balcony on which this brave woman stood, and waved them a cheer as they passed; and I daresay it was not from want of courage, but from a sense of female delicacy and propriety, that she refrained from leading the gallant —th personally into action.

On Sundays, and at periods of a solemn nature, Mrs. O'Dowd used to read with great gravity out of a large volume of her uncle the Dean's sermons. It had been of great comfort to her on board the transport as they were coming home, and were very nearly wrecked, on their return from the West Indies. After the regiment's departure she betook herself to this volume for meditation; perhaps she did not understand much of what she was reading, and her thoughts were elsewhere: but the sleep project, with poor Mick's nightcap there on the pillow, was quite a vain one. So it is in the world. Jack or Donald marches away to glory with his knapsack on his shoulder, stepping out briskly to the tune of "The Girl I left behind me." It is she who remains and suffers,—and has the leisure to think, and brood, and remember.

Knowing how useless regrets are, and how the indulgence of sentiment only serves to make people more miserable, Mrs. Rebecca wisely determined to give way to no vain feelings of sorrow, and bore the parting from her husband with quite a Spartan equanimity. Indeed Captain Rawdon himself was much more affected

at the leave-taking than the resolute little woman to whom he bade farewell. She had mastered this rude coarse nature; and he loved and worshipped her with all his faculties of regard and admiration. In all his life he had never been so happy, as, during the past few months, his wife had made him. All former delights of turf, mess, hunting-field, and gambling-table; all previous loves and courtships of milliners, opera-dancers, and the like easy triumphs of the clumsy military Adonis, were quite insipid when compared to the lawful matrimonial pleasures which of late he had enjoyed. She had known perpetually how to divert him; and he had found his house and her society a thousand times more pleasant than any place or company which he had ever frequented from his childhood until now. And he cursed his past follies and extravagances, and bemoaned his vast outlying debts above all, which must remain for ever as obstacles to prevent his wife's advancement in the world. He had often groaned over these in midnight conversations with Rebecca, although as a bachelor they had never given him any disquiet. He himself was struck with this phenomenon. "Hang it," he would say (or perhaps use a still stronger expression out of his simple vocabulary), "before I was married I didn't care what bills I put my name to, and so long as Moses would wait or Levy would renew for three months, I kept on never minding. But since I'm married, except renewing, of course, I give you my honour I've not touched a bit of stamped paper."

Rebecca always knew how to conjure away these moods of melancholy. "Why, my stupid love," she would say, "we have not done with your aunt yet. If she fails us, isn't there what you call the *Gazette?* or,

stop, when your uncle Bute's life drops, I have another scheme. The living has always belonged to the younger brother, and why shouldn't you sell out and go into the Church?" The idea of this conversion set Rawdon into roars of laughter: you might have heard the explosion through the hotel at midnight, and the haw-haws of the great dragoon's voice. General Tufto heard him from his quarters on the first floor above them; and Rebecca acted the scene with great spirit, and preached Rawdon's first sermon, to the immense delight of the General at breakfast.

But these were mere by-gone days and talk. When the final news arrived that the campaign was opened, and the troops were to march, Rawdon's gravity became such that Becky rallied him about it in a manner which rather hurt the feelings of the Guardsman. "You don't suppose I'm afraid, Becky, I should think," he said, with a tremor in his voice. "But I'm a pretty good mark for a shot, and you see if it brings me down, why I leave one and perhaps two behind me whom I should wish to provide for, as I brought 'em into the scrape. It is no laughing matter *that,* Mrs. C., anyways."

Rebecca by a hundred caresses and kind words tried to soothe the feelings of the wounded lover. It was only when her vivacity and sense of humour got the better of this sprightly creature (as they would do under most circumstances of life indeed) that she would break out with her satire, but she could soon put on a demure face. "Dearest love," she said, "do you suppose I feel nothing?" and hastily dashing something from her eyes, she looked up in her husband's face with a smile.

"Look here," said he. "If I drop, let us see what there is for you. I have had a pretty good run of luck

here, and here's two hundred and thirty pounds. I have got ten Napoleons in my pocket. That is as much as I shall want; for the General pays everything like a prince; and if I'm hit, why you know I cost nothing. Don't cry, little woman; I may live to vex you yet. Well, I shan't take either of my horses, but shall ride the General's grey charger: it's cheaper, and I told him mine was lame. If I'm done, those two ought to fetch you something. Grigg offered ninety for the mare yesterday, before this confounded news came, and like a fool I wouldn't let her go under the two 0's. Bullfinch will fetch his price any day, only you'd better sell him in this country, because the dealers have so many bills of mine, and so I'd rather he shouldn't go back to England. Your little mare the General gave you will fetch something, and there's no d—d livery stable bills here as there are in London," Rawdon added, with a laugh. "There's that dressing-case cost me two hundred,—that is, I owe two for it; and the gold tops and bottles must be worth thirty or forty. Please to put *that* up the spout, ma'am, with my pins, and rings, and watch and chain, and things. They cost a precious lot of money. Miss Crawley, I know, paid a hundred down for the chain and ticker. Gold tops and bottles, indeed! dammy, I'm sorry I didn't take more now. Edwards pressed on me a silver-gilt boot-jack, and I might have had a dressing-case fitted up with a silver warming-pan, and a service of plate. But we must make the best of what we've got, Becky, you know."

And so, making his last dispositions, Captain Crawley, who had seldom thought about anything but himself, until the last few months of his life, when Love had obtained the mastery over the dragoon, went through

the various items of his little catalogue of effects, striving to see how they might be turned into money for his wife's benefit, in case any accident should befal him. He pleased himself by noting down with a pencil, in his big school-boy handwriting, the various items of his portable property which might be sold for his widow's advantage—as, for example, " My double-barril by Manton, say 40 guineas; my driving cloak, lined with sable fur, £50; my duelling pistols in rosewood case (same which I shot Captain Marker), £20; my regulation saddle-holsters and housings; my Laurie ditto," and so forth, over all of which articles he made Rebecca the mistress.

Faithful to his plan of economy, the Captain dressed himself in his oldest and shabbiest uniform and epaulets, leaving the newest behind, under his wife's (or it might be his widow's) guardianship. And this famous dandy of Windsor and Hyde Park went off on his campaign with a kit as modest as that of a sergeant, and with something like a prayer on his lips for the woman he was leaving. He took her up from the ground, and held her in his arms for a minute, tight pressed against his strong-beating heart. His face was purple and his eyes dim, as he put her down and left her. He rode by his General's side, and smoked his cigar in silence as they hastened after the troops of the General's brigade, which preceded them; and it was not until they were some miles on their way that he left off twirling his moustache and broke silence.

And Rebecca, as we have said, wisely determined not to give way to unavailing sentimentality on her husband's departure. She waved him an adieu from the window, and stood there for a moment looking out after he was gone. The cathedral towers and the full gables of

the quaint old houses were just beginning to blush in the sunrise. There had been no rest for her that night. She was still in her pretty ball-dress, her fair hair hanging somewhat out of curl on her neck, and the circles round her eyes dark with watching. "What a fright I seem," she said, examining herself in the glass, "and how pale this pink makes one look!" So she divested herself of this pink raiment; in doing which a note fell out from her corsage, which she picked up with a smile, and locked into her dressing-box. And then she put her bouquet of the ball into a glass of water, and went to bed, and slept very comfortably.

The town was quite quiet when she woke up at ten o'clock, and partook of coffee, very requisite and comfortable after the exhaustion and grief of the morning's occurrences.

This meal over, she resumed honest Rawdon's calculations of the night previous, and surveyed her position. Should the worst befal, all things considered, she was pretty well to do. There were her own trinkets and

trousseau, in addition to those which her husband had left behind. Rawdon's generosity, when they were first married, has already been described and lauded. Besides these, and the little mare, the General, her slave and worshipper, had made her many very handsome presents, in the shape of cashmere shawls bought at the auction of a bankrupt French general's lady, and numerous tributes from the jewellers' shops, all of which betokened her admirer's taste and wealth. As for "tickers," as poor Rawdon called watches, her apartments were alive with their clicking. For happening to mention one night that hers, which Rawdon had given to her, was of English workmanship, and went ill, on the very next morning there came to her a little bijou marked Leroy, with a chain and cover charmingly set with turquoises, and another signed Breguet, which was covered with pearls, and yet scarcely bigger than a half-crown. General Tufto had bought one, and Captain Osborne had gallantly presented the other. Mrs. Osborne had no watch, though, to do George justice, she might have had one for the asking, and the Honourable Mrs. Tufto in England had an old instrument of her mother's that might have served for the plate warming-pan which Rawdon talked about. If Messrs. Howell and James were to publish a list of the purchasers of all the trinkets which they sell, how surprised would some families be: and if all these ornaments went to gentlemen's lawful wives and daughters, what a profusion of jewellery there would be exhibited in the genteelest homes of Vanity Fair!

Every calculation made of these valuables Mrs. Rebecca found, not without a pungent feeling of triumph and self-satisfaction, that should circumstances occur,

she might reckon on six or seven hundred pounds at the very least to begin the world with; and she passed the morning disposing, ordering, looking out, and locking up her properties in the most agreeable manner. Among the notes in Rawdon's pocket-book, was a draft for twenty pounds on Osborne's banker. This made her think about Mrs. Osborne. "I will go and get the draft cashed," she said, "and pay a visit afterwards to poor little Emmy." If this is a novel without a hero, at least let us lay claim to a heroine. No man in the British army which has marched away, not the great Duke himself, could be more cool or collected in the presence of doubts or difficulties, than the indomitable little aide-de-camp's wife.

And there was another of our acquaintances who was also to be left behind, a non-combatant, and whose emotions and behaviour we have therefore a right to know. This was our friend the ex-collector of Boggley Wollah, whose rest was broken, like other people's, by the sounding of the bugles in the early morning. Being a great sleeper, and fond of his bed, it is possible he would have snoozed on until his usual hour of rising in the forenoon, in spite of all the drums, bugles, and bagpipes in the British army, but for an interruption, which did not come from George Osborne, who shared Jos's quarters with him, and was as usual occupied too much with his own affairs or with grief at parting with his wife, to think of taking leave of his slumbering brother-in-law—it was not George, we say, who interposed between Jos Sedley and sleep, but Captain Dobbin, who came and roused him up, insisting on shaking hands with him before his departure.

"Very kind of you," said Jos, yawning, and wishing the Captain at the deuce.

"I—I didn't like to go off without saying good-bye, you know," Dobbin said in a very incoherent manner; "because you know some of us mayn't come back again, and I like to see you all well, and—and that sort of thing, you know."

"What do you mean?" Jos asked, rubbing his eyes. The Captain did not in the least hear him or look at the stout gentleman in the nightcap, about whom he professed to have such a tender interest. The hypocrite was looking and listening with all his might in the direction of George's apartments, striding about the room, upsetting the chairs, beating the tattoo, biting his nails, and showing other signs of great inward emotion.

Jos had always had rather a mean opinion of the Captain, and now began to think his courage was somewhat equivocal. "What is it I can do for you, Dobbin?" he said, in a sarcastic tone.

"I tell you what you can do," the Captain replied, coming up to the bed; "we march in a quarter of an hour, Sedley, and neither George nor I may ever come back. Mind you, you are not to stir from this town until you ascertain how things go. You are to stay here and watch over your sister, and comfort her, and see that no harm comes to her. If anything happens to George, remember she has no one but you in the world to look to. If it goes wrong with the army, you'll see her safe back to England; and you will promise me on your word that you will never desert her. I know you won't: as far as money goes, you were always free enough with that. Do you want any? I mean, have you enough gold to take you back to England in case of a misfortune?"

"Sir," said Jos, majestically, "when I want money, I know where to ask for it. And as for my sister, *you* needn't tell me how I ought to behave to her."

"You speak like a man of spirit, Jos," the other answered good-naturedly, "and I am glad that George can leave her in such good hands. So I may give him your word of honour, may I, that in case of extremity you will stand by her?"

"Of course, of course," answered Mr. Jos, whose generosity in money matters Dobbin estimated quite correctly.

"And you'll see her safe out of Brussels in the event of a defeat?"

"A defeat! D— it, sir, it's impossible. Don't try and frighten *me,*" the hero cried from his bed; and Dobbin's mind was thus perfectly set at ease now that Jos had spoken out so resolutely respecting his conduct to his sister. "At least," thought the Captain, "there will be a retreat secured for her in case the worst should ensue."

If Captain Dobbin expected to get any personal comfort and satisfaction from having one more view of Amelia before the regiment marched away, his selfishness was punished just as such odious egotism deserved to be. The door of Jos's bed-room opened into the sitting-room which was common to the family party, and opposite this door was that of Amelia's chamber. The bugles had wakened everybody; there was no use in concealment now. George's servant was packing in this room: Osborne coming in and out of the contiguous bedroom, flinging to the man such articles as he thought fit to carry on the campaign. And presently Dobbin had the opportunity which his heart coveted, and he got sight

of Amelia's face once more. But what a face it was! So white, so wild and despair-stricken, that the remembrance of it haunted him afterwards, like a crime, and the sight smote him with inexpressible pangs of longing and pity.

She was wrapped in a white morning dress, her hair falling on her shoulders, and her large eyes fixed and without light. By way of helping on the preparations for the departure, and showing that she too could be useful at a moment so critical, this poor soul had taken up a sash of George's from the drawers whereon it lay, and followed him to and fro with the sash in her hand, looking on mutely as his packing proceeded. She came out and stood, leaning at the wall, holding this sash against her bosom, from which the heavy net of crimson dropped like a large stain of blood. Our gentle-hearted Captain felt a guilty shock as he looked at her. "Good God," thought he, "and is it grief like this I dared to pry into?" And there was no help: no means to soothe and comfort this helpless, speechless misery. He stood for a moment and looked at her, powerless and torn with pity, as a parent regards an infant in pain.

At last, George took Emmy's hand, and led her back into the bed-room, from whence he came out alone. The parting had taken place in that moment, and he was gone.

"Thank Heaven that is over," George thought, bounding down the stair, his sword under his arm; as he ran swiftly to the alarm ground, where the regiment was mustered, and whither trooped men and officers hurrying from their billets, his pulse was throbbing and his cheeks flushed: the great game of war was going to be played, and he one of the players. What a fierce ex-

citement of doubt, hope, and pleasure! What tremendous hazards of loss or gain! What were all the games of chance he had ever played compared to this one? Into all contests requiring athletic skill and courage, the young man, from his boyhood upwards, had flung himself with all his might. The champion of his school and his regiment, the bravos of his companions had followed him everywhere; from the boys' cricket-match to the garrison-races, he had won a hundred of triumphs; and wherever he went, women and men had admired and envied him. What qualities are there for which a man gets so speedy a return of applause, as those of bodily superiority, activity, and valour? Time out of mind strength and courage have been the theme of bards and romances; and from the story of Troy down to to-day, poetry has always chosen a soldier for a hero. I wonder is it because men are cowards in heart that they admire bravery so much, and place military valour so far beyond every other quality for reward and worship?

So, at the sound of that stirring call to battle, George jumped away from the gentle arms in which he had been dallying; not without a feeling of shame (although his wife's hold on him had been but feeble), that he should have been detained there so long. The same feeling of eagerness and excitement was amongst all those friends of his of whom we have had occasional glimpses, from the stout senior Major, who led the regiment into action, to little Stubble, the Ensign, who was to bear its colours on that day.

The sun was just rising as the march began—it was a gallant sight—the band led the column, playing the regimental march—then came the Major in command, riding upon Pyramus, his stout charger—then marched the

grenadiers, their Captain at their head; in the centre were the colours, borne by the senior and junior Ensigns —then George came marching at the head of his company. He looked up, and smiled at Amelia, and passed on; and even the sound of the music died away.

CHAPTER XXXI

IN WHICH JOS SEDLEY TAKES CARE OF HIS SISTER

THUS all the superior officers being summoned on duty elsewhere, Jos Sedley was left in command of the little colony at Brussels, with Amelia invalided, Isidor, his Belgian servant, and the *bonne,* who was maid-of-all-work for the establishment, as a garrison under him. Though he was disturbed in spirit, and his rest destroyed by Dobbin's interruption and the occurrences of the morning, Jos nevertheless remained for many hours in bed, wakeful and rolling about there until his usual hour of rising had arrived. The sun was high in the heavens, and our gallant friends of the —th miles on their march, before the civilian appeared in his flowered dressing-gown at breakfast.

About George's absence, his brother-in-law was very easy in mind. Perhaps Jos was rather pleased in his heart that Osborne was gone, for during George's presence, the other had played but a very secondary part in the household, and Osborne did not scruple to show his contempt for the stout civilian. But Emmy had always been good and attentive to him. It was she who ministered to his comforts, who superintended the dishes that he liked, who walked or rode with him (as she had many,

too many, opportunities of doing, for where was George?), and who interposed her sweet face between his anger and her husband's scorn. Many timid remonstrances had she uttered to George in behalf of her brother, but the former in his trenchant way cut these entreaties short. "I'm an honest man," he said, "and if I have a feeling I show it, as an honest man will. How the deuce, my dear, would you have me behave respectfully to such a fool as your brother?" So Jos was pleased with George's absence. His plain hat, and gloves on a sideboard, and the idea that the owner was away, caused Jos I don't know what secret thrill of pleasure. "*He* won't be troubling me this morning," Jos thought, "with his dandified airs and his impudence."

"Put the Captain's hat into the ante-room," he said to Isidor, the servant.

"Perhaps he won't want it again," replied the lackey, looking knowingly at his master. He hated George too, whose insolence towards him was quite of the English sort.

"And ask if Madame is coming to breakfast," Mr. Sedley said with great majesty, ashamed to enter with a servant upon the subject of his dislike for George. The truth is, he had abused his brother to the valet a score of times before.

Alas! Madame could not come to breakfast, and cut the *tartines* that Mr. Jos liked. Madame was a great deal too ill, and had been in a frightful state ever since her husband's departure, so her *bonne* said. Jos showed his sympathy by pouring her out a large cup of tea. It was his way of exhibiting kindness; and he improved on this; he not only sent her breakfast, but he bethought him what delicacies she would most like for dinner.

Isidor, the valet, had looked on very sulkily, while Osborne's servant was disposing of his master's baggage previous to the Captain's departure: for in the first place he hated Mr. Osborne, whose conduct to him, and to all inferiors, was generally overbearing, (nor does the continental domestic like to be treated with insolence as our own better-tempered servants do:) and secondly, he was angry that so many valuables should be removed from under his hands, to fall into other people's possession when the English discomfiture should arrive. Of this defeat he and a vast number of other persons in Brussels and Belgium did not make the slightest doubt. The almost universal belief was, that the Emperor would divide the Prussian and English armies, annihilate one after the other, and march into Brussels before three days were over: when all the moveables of his present masters, who would be killed, or fugitives, or prisoners, would lawfully become the property of Monsieur Isidor.

As he helped Jos through his toilsome and complicated daily toilette, this faithful servant would calculate what he should do with the very articles with which he was decorating his master's person. He would make a present of the silver essence-bottles and toilet knick-knacks to a young lady of whom he was fond; and keep the English cutlery and the large ruby pin for himself. It would look very smart upon one of the fine frilled shirts, which, with the gold-laced cap and the frogged frock coat, that might easily be cut down to suit his shape, and the Captain's gold-headed cane, and the great double ring with the rubies, which he would have made into a pair of beautiful earrings, he calculated would make a perfect Adonis of himself, and render Mademoiselle Reine an easy prey. "How those sleeve-buttons

will suit me," thought he, as he fixed a pair on the fat pudgy wrists of Mr. Sedley. "I long for sleeve-buttons; and the Captain's boots with brass spurs, in the next room, *corbleu!* what an effect they will make in the Allée Verte!" So while Monsieur Isidor with bodily fingers was holding on to his master's nose, and shaving the lower part of Jos's face, his imagination was rambling along the Green Avenue, dressed out in a frogged coat and lace, and in company with Mademoiselle Reine; he was loitering in spirit on the banks, and examining the barges sailing slowly under the cool shadows of the trees by the canal, or refreshing himself with a mug of Faro at the bench of a beer-house on the road to Laeken.

But Mr. Joseph Sedley, luckily for his own peace, no more knew what was passing in his domestic's mind than the respected reader and I suspect what John or Mary, whose wages we pay, think of ourselves. What our servants think of us!—Did we know what our intimates and dear relations thought of us, we should live in a world that we should be glad to quit, and in a frame of mind and a constant terror, that would be perfectly unbearable. So Jos's man was marking his victim down, as you see one of Mr. Paynter's assistants in Leadenhall-street ornament an unconscious turtle with a placard on which is written, "Soup to-morrow."

Amelia's attendant was much less selfishly disposed. Few dependants could come near that kind and gentle creature without paying their usual tribute of loyalty and affection to her sweet and affectionate nature. And it is a fact that Pauline, the cook, consoled her mistress more than anybody whom she saw on this wretched morning; for when she found how Amelia remained for

hours, silent, motionless, and haggard, by the windows in which she had placed herself to watch the last bayonets of the column as it marched away, the honest girl took the lady's hand, and said, *Tenez, Madame, est-ce qu'il n'est pas aussi à l'armée, mon homme à moi?* with which she burst into tears, and Amelia falling into her arms, did likewise, and so each pitied and soothed the other.

Several times during the forenoon Mr. Jos's Isidor went from his lodgings into the town, and to the gates of the hotels and lodging-houses round about the Parc, where the English were congregated, and there mingled with other valets, couriers, and lackeys, gathered such news as was abroad, and brought back bulletins for his master's information. Almost all these gentlemen were in heart partisans of the Emperor, and had their opinions about the speedy end of the campaign. The Emperor's proclamation from Avesnes had been distributed everywhere plentifully in Brussels. "Soldiers!" it said, "this is the anniversary of Marengo and Friedland, by which the destinies of Europe were twice decided. Then, as after Austerlitz, as after Wagram, we were too generous. We believed in the oaths and promises of princes whom we suffered to remain upon their thrones. Let us march once more to meet them. We and they, are we not still the same men? Soldiers! these same Prussians who are so arrogant to-day, were three to one against you at Jena, and six to one at Montmirail. Those among you who were prisoners in England can tell their comrades what frightful torments they suffered on board the English hulks. Madmen! a moment of prosperity has blinded them, and if they enter into France it will be to find a grave there!" But the partisans of the French prophesied a more speedy extermi-

nation of the Emperor's enemies than this; and it was agreed on all hands that Prussians and British would never return except as prisoners in the rear of the conquering army.

These opinions in the course of the day were brought to operate upon Mr. Sedley. He was told that the Duke of Wellington had gone to try and rally his army, the advance of which had been utterly crushed the night before.

"Crushed, psha!" said Jos, whose heart was pretty stout at breakfast-time. "The Duke has gone to beat the Emperor as he has beaten all his generals before."

"His papers are burned, his effects are removed, and his quarters are being got ready for the Duke of Dalmatia," Jos's informant replied. "I had it from his own *maître d'hôtel*. Milor Duc de Richemont's people are packing up everything. His Grace has fled already, and the Duchess is only waiting to see the plate packed to join the King of France at Ostend."

"The King of France is at Ghent, fellow," replied Jos, affecting incredulity.

"He fled last night to Bruges, and embarks to-day from Ostend. The Duc de Berri is taken prisoner. Those who wish to be safe had better go soon, for the dykes will be opened to-morrow, and who can fly when the whole country is under water?"

"Nonsense, sir, we are three to one, sir, against any force Boney can bring into the field," Mr. Sedley objected; "the Austrians and the Russians are on their march. He must, he shall be crushed," Jos said, slapping his hand on the table.

"The Prussians were three to one at Jena, and he took their army and kingdom in a week. They were six to

one at Montmirail, and he scattered them like sheep. The Austrian army *is* coming, but with the Empress and the King of Rome at its head; and the Russians, bah! the Russians will withdraw. No quarter is to be given to the English, on account of their cruelty to our braves on board the infamous pontoons. Look here, here it is in black and white. Here's the proclamation of his Majesty the Emperor and King," said the now declared partisan of Napoleon, and taking the document from his pocket, Isidor sternly thrust it into his master's face, and already looked upon the frogged coat and valuables as his own spoil.

Jos was, if not seriously alarmed as yet, at least considerably disturbed in mind. "Give me my coat and cap, sir," said he, "and follow me. I will go myself and learn the truth of these reports." Isidor was furious as Jos put on the braided frock. "Milor had better not wear that military coat," said he; "the Frenchmen have sworn not to give quarter to a single British soldier."

"Silence, sirrah!" said Jos, with a resolute countenance still, and thrust his arm into the sleeve with indomitable resolution, in the performance of which heroic act he was found by Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, who at this juncture came up to visit Amelia, and entered without ringing at the antechamber door.

Rebecca was dressed very neatly and smartly, as usual: her quiet sleep after Rawdon's departure had refreshed her, and her pink smiling cheeks were quite pleasant to look at, in a town and on a day when everybody else's countenance wore the appearance of the deepest anxiety and gloom. She laughed at the attitude in which Jos was discovered, and the struggles and con-

vulsions with which the stout gentleman thrust himself into the braided coat.

"Are you preparing to join the army, Mr. Joseph?" she said. "Is there to be nobody left in Brussels to protect us poor women?" Jos succeeded in plunging

into the coat, and came forward blushing and stuttering out excuses to his fair visitor. "How was she after the events of the morning—after the fatigues of the ball the night before?" Monsieur Isidor disappeared into his master's adjacent bed-room, bearing off the flowered dressing-gown.

"How good of you to ask," said she, pressing one of his hands in both her own. "How cool and collected

you look when everybody else is frightened! How is our dear little Emmy? It must have been an awful, awful parting."

"'Tremendous," Jos said.

"You men can bear anything," replied the lady. "Parting or danger is nothing to you. Own now that you were going to join the army and leave us to our fate. I know you were—something tells me you were. I was so frightened, when the thought came into my head (for I do sometimes think of you when I am alone, Mr. Joseph), that I ran off immediately to beg and entreat you not to fly from us."

This speech might be interpreted, "My dear sir, should an accident befal the army, and a retreat be necessary, you have a very comfortable carriage, in which I propose to take a seat." I don't know whether Jos understood the words in this sense. But he was profoundly mortified by the lady's inattention to him during their stay at Brussels. He had never been presented to any of Rawdon Crawley's great acquaintances: he had scarcely been invited to Rebecca's parties; for he was too timid to play much, and his presence bored George and Rawdon equally, who neither of them, perhaps, liked to have a witness of the amusements in which the pair chose to indulge. "Ah!" thought Jos, "now she wants me she comes to me. When there is nobody else in the way she can think about old Joseph Sedley!" But besides these doubts he felt flattered at the idea Rebecca expressed of his courage.

He blushed a good deal, and put on an air of importance. "I should like to see the action," he said. "Every man of any spirit would, you know. I've seen a little service in India, but nothing on this grand scale."

"You men would sacrifice anything for a pleasure," Rebecca answered. "Captain Crawley left me this morning as gay as if he were going to a hunting party. What does he care? What do any of you care for the agonies and tortures of a poor forsaken woman? (I wonder whether he *could* really have been going to the troops, this great lazy gourmand?) Oh! dear Mr. Sedley, I have come to you for comfort—for consolation. I have been on my knees all the morning. I tremble at the frightful danger into which our husbands, our friends, our brave troops and allies, are rushing. And I come here for shelter, and find another of my friends—the last remaining to me—bent upon plunging into the dreadful scene!"

"My dear madam," Jos replied, now beginning to be quite soothed. "Don't be alarmed. I only said I should like to go—what Briton would not? But my duty keeps me here: I can't leave that poor creature in the next room." And he pointed with his finger to the door of the chamber in which Amelia was.

"Good noble brother!" Rebecca said, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, and smelling the eau-de-cologne with which it was scented. "I have done you injustice: you have got a heart. I thought you had not."

"O, upon my honour!" Jos said, making a motion as if he would lay his hand upon the spot in question. "You do me injustice, indeed you do—my dear Mrs. Crawley."

"I do, now your heart is true to your sister. But I remember two years ago—when it was false to me!" Rebecca said, fixing her eyes upon him for an instant, and then turning away into the window.

Jos blushed violently. That organ which he was ac-

cused by Rebecca of not possessing began to thump tumultuously. He recalled the days when he had fled from her, and the passion which had once inflamed him—the days when he had driven her in his curricle: when she had knit the green purse for him: when he had sate enraptured gazing at her white arms and bright eyes.

"I know you think me ungrateful," Rebecca continued, coming out of the window, and once more looking at him and addressing him in a low tremulous voice. "Your coldness, your averted looks, your manner when we have met of late—when I came in just now, all proved it to me. But were there no reasons why I should avoid you? Let your own heart answer that question. Do you think my husband was too much inclined to welcome you? The only unkind words I have ever had from him (I will do Captain Crawley that justice) have been about you—and most cruel, cruel words they were."

"Good gracious! what have I done?" asked Jos in a flurry of pleasure and perplexity; "what have I done—to—to—?"

"Is jealousy nothing?" said Rebecca. "He makes me miserable about you. And whatever it might have been once—my heart is all his. I am innocent now. Am I not, Mr. Sedley?"

All Jos's blood tingled with delight, as he surveyed this victim to his attractions. A few adroit words, one or two knowing tender glances of the eyes, and his heart was inflamed again and his doubts and suspicions forgotten. From Solomon downwards, have not wiser men than he been cajoled and befooled by women? "If the worst comes to the worst," Becky thought, "my retreat is secure; and I have a right-hand seat in the barouche."

There is no knowing into what declarations of love

and ardour the tumultuous passions of Mr. Joseph might have led him, if Isidor the valet had not made his re-appearance at this minute, and begun to busy himself about the domestic affairs. Jos, who was just going to gasp out an avowal, choked almost with the emotion that he was obliged to restrain. Rebecca too bethought her that it was time she should go in and comfort her dearest Amelia. *"Au revoir,"* she said, kissing her hand to Mr. Joseph, and tapped gently at the door of his sister's apartment. As she entered and closed the door on herself, he sank down in a chair, and gazed and sighed and puffed portentously. "That coat is very tight for Milor," Isidor said, still having his eye on the frogs; but his master heard him not: his thoughts were elsewhere: now glowing, maddening, upon the contemplation of the enchanting Rebecca: anon shrinking guiltily before the vision of the jealous Rawdon Crawley, with his curling, fierce moustachios, and his terrible duelling pistols loaded and cocked.

Rebecca's appearance struck Amelia with terror, and made her shrink back. It recalled her to the world and the remembrance of yesterday. In the overpowering fears about to-morrow she had forgotten Rebecca,—jealousy—everything except that her husband was gone and was in danger. Until this dauntless worldling came in and broke the spell, and lifted the latch, we too have forborne to enter into that sad chamber. How long had that poor girl been on her knees! what hours of speechless prayer and bitter prostration had she passed there! The war-chroniclers who write brilliant stories of fight and triumph scarcely tell us of these. These are too mean parts of the pageant: and you don't hear widows' cries or mothers' sobs in the midst of the shouts and jubi-

lation in the great Chorus of Victory. And yet when was the time, that such have not cried out: heartbroken, humble protestants, unheard in the uproar of the triumph!

After the first movement of terror in Amelia's mind —when Rebecca's green eyes lighted upon her, and rustling in her fresh silks and brilliant ornaments, the latter tripped up with extended arms to embrace her—a feeling of anger succeeded, and from being deadly pale before, her face flushed up red, and she returned Rebecca's look after a moment with a steadiness which surprised and somewhat abashed her rival.

"Dearest Amelia, you are very unwell," the visitor said, putting forth her hand to take Amelia's. "What is it? I could not rest until I knew how you were."

Amelia drew back her hand—never since her life began had that gentle soul refused to believe or to answer any demonstration of good-will or affection. But she drew back her hand, and trembled all over. "Why are *you* here, Rebecca?" she said, still looking at her solemnly with her large eyes. These glances troubled her visitor.

"She must have seen him give me the letter at the ball," Rebecca thought. "Don't be agitated, dear Amelia," she said, looking down. "I came but to see if I could—if you were well."

"Are you well?" said Amelia. "I dare say you are. You don't love your husband. You would not be here if you did. Tell me, Rebecca, did I ever do you anything but kindness?"

"Indeed, Amelia, no," the other said, still hanging down her head.

"When you were quite poor, who was it that be-

friended you? Was I not a sister to you? You saw us all in happier days before he married me. I was all in all then to him; or would he have given up his fortune, his family, as he nobly did to make me happy? Why did you come between my love and me? Who sent you to separate those whom God joined, and take my darling's heart from me—my own husband? Do you think you could love him as I did? His love was everything to me. You knew it, and wanted to rob me of it. For shame, Rebecca; bad and wicked woman—false friend and false wife."

"Amelia, I protest before God, I have done my husband no wrong," Rebecca said, turning from her.

"Have you done *me* no wrong, Rebecca? You did not succeed, but you tried. Ask your heart if you did not?"

She knows nothing, Rebecca thought.

"He came back to me. I knew he would. I knew that no falsehood, no flattery, could keep him from me long. I knew he would come. I prayed so that he should."

The poor girl spoke these words with a spirit and volubility which Rebecca had never before seen in her, and before which the latter was quite dumb. "But what have I done to you," she continued in a more pitiful tone, "that you should try and take him from me? I had him but for six weeks. You might have spared me those, Rebecca. And yet, from the very first day of our wedding, you came and blighted it. Now he is gone, are you come to see how unhappy I am?" she continued. "You made me wretched enough for the past fortnight: you might have spared me to-day."

"I—I never came here," interposed Rebecca, with unlucky truth.

"No. You didn't come. You took him away. Are you come to fetch him from me?" she continued in a wilder tone. "He was here, but he is gone now. There on that very sofa he sate. Don't touch it. We sate and talked there. I was on his knee, and my arms were round his neck, and we said 'Our Father.' Yes, he was here: and they came and took him away, but he promised me to come back."

"He will come back, my dear," said Rebecca, touched in spite of herself.

"Look," said Amelia, "this is his sash—isn't it a pretty colour?" and she took up the fringe and kissed it. She had tied it round her waist at some part of the day. She had forgotten her anger, her jealousy, the very presence of her rival seemingly. For she walked silently and almost with a smile on her face, towards the bed, and began to smooth down George's pillow.

Rebecca walked, too, silently away. "How is Amelia?" asked Jos, who still held his position in the chair.

"There should be somebody with her," said Rebecca. "I think she is very unwell:" and she went away with a very grave face, refusing Mr. Sedley's entreaties that she would stay and partake of the early dinner which he had ordered.

Rebecca was of a good-natured and obliging disposition; and she liked Amelia rather than otherwise. Even her hard words, reproachful as they were, were complimentary—the groans of a person stinging under defeat. Meeting Mrs. O'Dowd, whom the Dean's sermons had by no means comforted, and who was walking very disconsolately in the Parc, Rebecca accosted the latter, rather to the surprise of the Major's wife, who was not

accustomed to such marks of politeness from Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, and informing her that poor little Mrs. Osborne was in a desperate condition, and almost mad with grief, sent off the good-natured Irishwoman straight to see if she could console her young favourite.

"I've cares of my own enough," Mrs. O'Dowd said, gravely, "and I thought poor Amelia would be little wanting for company this day. But if she's so bad as you say, and you can't attend to her, who used to be so fond of her, faith I'll see if I can be of service. And so good marning to ye, Madam;" with which speech and a toss of her head, the lady of the repayther took a farewell of Mrs. Crawley, whose company she by no means courted.

Becky watched her marching off, with a smile on her lip. She had the keenest sense of humour, and the Parthian look which the retreating Mrs. O'Dowd flung over her shoulder almost upset Mrs. Crawley's gravity. "My service to ye, me fine Madam, and I'm glad to see ye so cheerful," thought Peggy. "It's not *you* that will cry your eyes out with grief, any way." And with this she passed on, and speedily found her way to Mrs. Osborne's lodgings.

The poor soul was still at the bedside, where Rebecca had left her, and stood almost crazy with grief. The Major's wife, a stronger-minded woman, endeavoured her best to comfort her young friend. "You must bear up, Amelia, dear," she said kindly, "for he mustn't find you ill when he sends for you after the victory. It's not you are the only woman that are in the hands of God this day."

"I know that. I am very wicked, very weak," Amelia said. She knew her own weakness well enough. The

presence of the more resolute friend checked it, however; and she was the better of this control and company. They went on till two o'clock; their hearts were with the column as it marched farther and farther away. Dreadful doubt and anguish—prayers and fears and griefs unspeakable—followed the regiment. It was the women's tribute to the war. It taxes both alike, and takes the blood of the men, and the tears of the women.

At half-past two, an event occurred of daily importance to Mr. Joseph: the dinner-hour arrived. Warriors may fight and perish, but he must dine. He came into Amelia's room to see if he could coax her to share that meal. "Try," said he; "the soup is very good. Do try, Emmy," and he kissed her hand. Except when she was married, he had not done so much for years before. "You are very good and kind, Joseph," she said. "Everybody is, but, if you please, I will stay in my room to-day."

The savour of the soup, however, was agreeable to Mrs. O'Dowd's nostrils: and she thought she would bear Mr. Jos company. So the two sate down to their meal. "God bless the meat," said the Major's wife, solemnly: she was thinking of her honest Mick, riding at the head of his regiment: "'Tis but a bad dinner those poor boys will get to-day," she said, with a sigh, and then, like a philosopher, fell to.

Jos's spirits rose with his meal. He would drink the regiment's health; or, indeed, take any other excuse to indulge in a glass of champagne. "We'll drink to O'Dowd and the brave —th," said he, bowing gallantly to his guest. "Hey, Mrs. O'Dowd? Fill Mrs. O'Dowd's glass, Isidor."

But all of a sudden, Isidor started, and the Major's

wife laid down her knife and fork. The windows of the room were open, and looked southward, and a dull distant sound came over the sun-lighted roofs from that direction. "What is it?" said Jos. "Why don't you pour, you rascal?"

"*C'est le feu!*" said Isidor, running to the balcony.

"God defend us; it's cannon!" Mrs. O'Dowd cried, starting up, and followed too to the window. A thousand pale and anxious faces might have been seen looking from other casements. And presently it seemed as if the whole population of the city rushed into the streets.

CHAPTER XXXII

IN WHICH JOS TAKES FLIGHT, AND THE WAR IS BROUGHT TO A CLOSE

WE of peaceful London city have never beheld—and please God never shall witness—such a scene of hurry and alarm, as that which Brussels presented. Crowds rushed to the Namur gate, from which direction the noise proceeded, and many rode along the level *chaussée,* to be in advance of any intelligence from the army. Each man asked his neighbour for news; and even great English lords and ladies condescended to speak to persons whom they did not know. The friends of the French went abroad, wild with excitement, and prophesying the triumph of their Emperor. The merchants closed their shops, and came out to swell the general chorus of alarm and clamour. Women rushed to the churches, and crowded the chapels, and knelt and prayed on the flags and steps. The dull sound of the cannon went on rolling, rolling. Presently carriages with travellers began to leave the town, galloping away by the Ghent barrier. The prophecies of the French partisans began to pass for

facts. "He has cut the armies in two," it was said. "He is marching straight on Brussels. He will overpower the English, and be here to-night." "He will overpower the English," shrieked Isidor to his master, "and will be here to-night." The man bounded in and out from the lodgings to the street, always returning with some fresh particulars of disaster. Jos's face grew paler and paler. Alarm began to take entire possession of the stout civilian. All the champagne he drank brought no courage to him. Before sunset he was worked up to such a pitch of nervousness as gratified his friend Isidor to behold, who now counted surely upon the spoils of the owner of the laced coat.

The women were away all this time. After hearing the firing for a moment, the stout Major's wife bethought her of her friend in the next chamber, and ran in to watch, and if possible to console, Amelia. The idea that she had that helpless and gentle creature to protect, gave additional strength to the natural courage of the honest Irishwoman. She passed five hours by her friend's side, sometimes in remonstrance, sometimes talking cheerfully, oftener in silence, and terrified mental supplication. "I never let go her hand once," said the stout lady afterwards, "until after sunset, when the firing was over." Pauline, the *bonne,* was on her knees at church hard by, praying for *son homme à elle.*

When the noise of the cannonading was over, Mrs. O'Dowd issued out of Amelia's room into the parlour adjoining, where Jos sate with two emptied flasks, and courage entirely gone. Once or twice he had ventured into his sister's bed-room, looking very much alarmed, and as if he would say something. But the Major's wife kept her place, and he went away without disburthen-

ing himself of his speech. He was ashamed to tell her that he wanted to fly.

But when she made her appearance in the dining-room, where he sate in the twilight in the cheerless company of his empty champagne-bottles, he began to open his mind to her.

"Mrs. O'Dowd," he said, "hadn't you better get Amelia ready?"

"Are you going to take her out for a walk?" said the Major's lady; "sure she's too weak to stir."

"I—I've ordered the carriage," he said, "and—and post-horses; Isidor is gone for them," Jos continued.

"What do you want with driving to-night?" answered the lady. "Isn't she better on her bed? I've just got her to lie down."

"Get her up," said Jos; "she must get up, I say:" and he stamped his foot energetically. "I say the horses are ordered—yes, the horses are ordered. It's all over, and—"

"And what?" asked Mrs. O'Dowd.

"I'm off for Ghent," Jos answered. "Everybody is going; there's a place for you! We shall start in half-an-hour."

The Major's wife looked at him with infinite scorn. "I don't move till O'Dowd gives me the route," said she. "You may go if you like, Mr. Sedley; but, faith, Amelia and I stop here."

"She *shall* go," said Jos, with another stamp of his foot. Mrs. O'Dowd put herself with arms akimbo before the bed-room door.

"Is it her mother you're going to take her to?" she said; "or do you want to go to mamma yourself, Mr. Sedley? Good marning—a pleasant journey to ye, sir.

Bon voyage, as they say, and take my counsel, and shave off them moustachios, or they'll bring you into mischief."

"D—n!" yelled out Jos, wild with fear, rage, and mortification; and Isidor came in at this juncture, swearing in his turn. "*Pas de chevaux, sacrebleu!*" hissed out the furious domestic. All the horses were gone. Jos was not the only man in Brussels seized with panic that day.

But Jos's fears, great and cruel as they were already, were destined to increase to an almost frantic pitch before the night was over. It has been mentioned how Pauline, the *bonne,* had *son homme à elle* also in the ranks of the army that had gone out to meet the Emperor Napoleon. This lover was a native of Brussels, and a Belgian hussar. The troops of his nation signalised themselves in this war for anything but courage, and young Van Cutsum, Pauline's admirer, was too good a soldier to disobey his Colonel's orders to run away. Whilst in garrison at Brussels young Regulus (he had been born in the revolutionary times) found his great comfort, and passed almost all his leisure moments in Pauline's kitchen; and it was with pockets and holsters crammed full of good things from her larder, that he had taken leave of his weeping sweetheart, to proceed upon the campaign a few days before.

As far as his regiment was concerned, this campaign was over now. They had formed a part of the division under the command of his sovereign apparent, the Prince of Orange, and as respected length of swords and moustachios, and the richness of uniform and equipments, Regulus and his comrades looked to be as gallant a body of men as ever trumpet sounded for.

When Ney dashed upon the advance of the allied troops, carrying one position after the other, until the arrival of the great body of the British army from Brussels changed the aspect of the combat of Quatre Bras, the squadrons among which Regulus rode showed the greatest activity in retreating before the French, and were dislodged from one post and another which they occupied with perfect alacrity on their part. Their movements were only checked by the advance of the British in their rear. Thus forced to halt, the enemy's cavalry (whose bloodthirsty obstinacy cannot be too severely reprehended) had at length an opportunity of coming to close quarters with the brave Belgians before them; who preferred to encounter the British rather than the French, and at once turning tail rode through the English regiments that were behind them, and scattered in all directions. The regiment in fact did not exist any more. It was nowhere. It had no headquarters. Regulus found himself galloping many miles from the field of action, entirely alone; and whither should he fly for refuge so naturally as to that kitchen and those faithful arms in which Pauline had so often welcomed him?

At some ten o'clock the clinking of a sabre might have been heard up the stair of the house where the Osbornes occupied a storey in the continental fashion. A knock might have been heard at the kitchen door; and poor Pauline, come back from church, fainted almost with terror as she opened it and saw before her her haggard hussar. He looked as pale as the midnight dragoon who came to disturb Leonora. Pauline would have screamed, but that her cry would have called her masters, and discovered her friend. She stifled her

scream, then, and leading her hero into the kitchen, gave him beer, and the choice bits from the dinner, which Jos had not had the heart to taste. The hussar showed he was no ghost by the prodigious quantity of flesh and beer which he devoured—and during the mouthfuls he told his tale of disaster.

His regiment had performed prodigies of courage,

and had withstood for a while the onset of the whole French army. But they were overwhelmed at last, as was the whole British army by this time. Ney destroyed each regiment as it came up. The Belgians in vain interposed to prevent the butchery of the English. The Brunswickers were routed and had fled—their Duke was killed. It was a general *débâcle*. He sought to drown his sorrow for the defeat in floods of beer.

Isidor, who had come into the kitchen, heard the con-

versation and rushed out to inform his master. "It is all over," he shrieked to Jos. "Milor Duke is a prisoner; the Duke of Brunswick is killed; the British army is in full flight; there is only one man escaped, and he is in the kitchen now—come and hear him." So Jos tottered into that apartment where Regulus still sate on the kitchen table, and clung fast to his flagon of beer. In the best French which he could muster, and which was in sooth of a very ungrammatical sort, Jos besought the hussar to tell his tale. The disasters deepened as Regulus spoke. He was the only man of his regiment not slain on the field. He had seen the Duke of Brunswick fall, the black hussars fly, the Ecossais pounded down by the cannon.

"And the —th?" gasped Jos.

"Cut in pieces," said the hussar—upon which Pauline cried out, "O my mistress, *ma bonne petite dame,*" went off fairly into hysterics, and filled the house with her screams.

Wild with terror, Mr. Sedley knew not how or where to seek for safety. He rushed from the kitchen back to the sitting-room, and cast an appealing look at Amelia's door, which Mrs. O'Dowd had closed and locked in his face; but he remembered how scornfully the latter had received him, and after pausing and listening for a brief space at the door, he left it, and resolved to go into the street, for the first time that day. So, seizing a candle, he looked about for his gold-laced cap, and found it lying in its usual place, on a console-table, in the ante-room, placed before a mirror at which Jos used to coquet, always giving his side-locks a twirl, and his cap the proper cock over his eye, before he went

forth to make appearance in public. Such is the force of habit, that even in the midst of his terror he began mechanically to twiddle with his hair, and arrange the cock of his hat. Then he looked amazed at the pale face in the glass before him, and especially at his moustachios, which had attained a rich growth in the course

of near seven weeks, since they had come into the world. They *will* mistake me for a military man, thought he, remembering Isidor's warning, as to the massacre with which all the defeated British army was threatened; and staggering back to his bed-chamber, he began wildly pulling the bell which summoned his valet.

Isidor answered that summons. Jos had sunk in a chair—he had torn off his neckcloths, and turned down his collars, and was sitting with both his hands lifted to his throat.

"*Coupez-moi,* Isidor," shouted he; "*vite! Coupez-moi!*"

Isidor thought for a moment he had gone mad, and that he wished his valet to cut his throat.

"*Les moustaches,*" gasped Jos; "*les moustaches—coupy, rasy, vite!*"—his French was of this sort—voluble, as we have said, but not remarkable for grammar.

Isidor swept off the moustachios in no time with the razor, and heard with inexpressible delight his master's orders that he should fetch a hat and a plain coat. "*Ne porty ploo—habit militair—bonny—bonny a voo, prenny dehors*"—were Jos's words,—the coat and cap were at last his property.

This gift being made, Jos selected a plain black coat and waistcoat from his stock, and put on a large white neckcloth, and a plain beaver. If he could have got a shovel-hat he would have worn it. As it was, you would have fancied he was a flourishing, large parson of the Church of England.

"*Venny maintenong,*" he continued, "*sweevy—ally—party—dong la roo.*" And so having said, he plunged swiftly down the stairs of the house, and passed into the street.

Although Regulus had vowed that he was the only man of his regiment or of the allied army, almost, who had escaped being cut to pieces by Ney, it appeared that his statement was incorrect, and that a good number more of the supposed victims had survived the massacre. Many scores of Regulus's comrades had found

their way back to Brussels, and—all agreeing that they had run away—filled the whole town with an idea of the defeat of the allies. The arrival of the French was expected hourly; the panic continued, and preparations for flight went on everywhere. No horses! thought Jos, in terror. He made Isidor inquire of scores of persons, whether they had any to lend or sell, and his heart sank within him, at the negative answers returned everywhere. Should he take the journey on foot? Even fear could not render that ponderous body so active.

Almost all the hotels occupied by the English in Brussels face the Parc, and Jos wandered irresolutely about in this quarter, with crowds of other people, oppressed as he was by fear and curiosity. Some families he saw more happy than himself, having discovered a team of horses, and rattling through the streets in retreat; others again there were whose case was like his own, and who could not for any bribes or entreaties procure the necessary means of flight. Amongst these would-be fugitives, Jos remarked the Lady Bareacres and her daughter, who sate in their carriage in the *porte-cochère* of their hotel, all their imperials packed, and the only drawback to whose flight was the same want of motive power which kept Jos stationary.

Rebecca Crawley occupied apartments in this hotel; and had before this period had sundry hostile meetings with the ladies of the Bareacres family. My Lady Bareacres cut Mrs. Crawley on the stairs when they met by chance; and in all places where the latter's name was mentioned, spoke perseveringly ill of her neighbour. The Countess was shocked at the familiarity of General Tufto with the aide-de-camp's wife. The Lady Blanche avoided her as if she had been an infectious

disease. Only the Earl himself kept up a sly occasional acquaintance with her, when out of the jurisdiction of his ladies.

Rebecca had her revenge now upon these insolent enemies. It became known in the hotel that Captain Crawley's horses had been left behind, and when the panic began, Lady Bareacres condescended to send her maid to the Captain's wife with her Ladyship's compliments, and a desire to know the price of Mrs. Crawley's horses. Mrs. Crawley returned a note with her compliments, and an intimation that it was not her custom to transact bargains with ladies' maids.

This curt reply brought the Earl in person to Becky's apartment; but he could get no more success than the first ambassador. "Send a lady's maid to *me!*" Mrs. Crawley cried in great anger; "why didn't my Lady Bareacres tell me to go and saddle the horses! Is it her Ladyship that wants to escape, or her Ladyship's *femme de chambre?*" And this was all the answer that the Earl bore back to his Countess.

What will not necessity do? The Countess herself actually came to wait upon Mrs. Crawley on the failure of her second envoy. She entreated her to name her own price; she even offered to invite Becky to Bareacres House, if the latter would but give her the means of returning to that residence. Mrs. Crawley sneered at her.

"I don't want to be waited on by bailiffs in livery," she said; "you will never get back though most probably —at least not you and your diamonds together. The French will have those. They will be here in two hours, and I shall be half way to Ghent by that time. I would not sell you my horses, no, not for the two largest dia-

monds that your Ladyship wore at the ball." Lady Bareacres trembled with rage and terror. The diamonds were sewed into her habit, and secreted in my Lord's padding and boots. "Woman, the diamonds are at the banker's, and I *will* have the horses," she said. Rebecca laughed in her face. The infuriate Countess went below, and sate in her carriage; her maid, her courier, and her husband were sent once more through the town, each to look for cattle; and woe betide those who came last! Her Ladyship was resolved on departing the very instant the horses arrived from any quarter —with her husband or without him.

Rebecca had the pleasure of seeing her Ladyship in the horseless carriage, and keeping her eyes fixed upon her, and bewailing, in the loudest tone of voice, the Countess's perplexities. "Not to be able to get horses!" she said, "and to have all those diamonds sewed into the carriage cushions! What a prize it will be for the French when they come!—the carriage and the diamonds, I mean; not the lady!" She gave this information to the landlord, to the servants, to the guests, and the innumerable stragglers about the courtyard. Lady Bareacres could have shot her from the carriage window.

It was while enjoying the humiliation of her enemy that Rebecca caught sight of Jos, who made towards her directly he perceived her.

That altered, frightened, fat face, told his secret well enough. He too wanted to fly, and was on the look-out for the means of escape. "*He* shall buy my horses," thought Rebecca, "and I'll ride the mare."

Jos walked up to his friend, and put the question for the hundredth time during the past hour, "Did she know where horses were to be had?"

"What, *you* fly?" said Rebecca, with a laugh. "I thought you were the champion of all the ladies, Mr. Sedley."

"I—I'm not a military man," gasped he.

"And Amelia?—Who is to protect that poor little sister of yours?" asked Rebecca. "You surely would not desert her?"

"What good can I do her, suppose—suppose the enemy arrive?" Jos answered. "They'll spare the women; but my man tells me that they have taken an oath to give no quarter to the men—the dastardly cowards."

"Horrid!" cried Rebecca, enjoying his perplexity.

"Besides, I don't want to desert her," cried the brother. "She *shan't* be deserted. There is a seat for her in my carriage, and one for you, dear Mrs. Crawley, if you will come; and if we can get horses—" sighed he—

"I have two to sell," the lady said. Jos could have flung himself into her arms at the news. "Get the carriage, Isidor," he cried; "we've found them—we have found them."

"My horses never were in harness," added the lady. "Bullfinch would kick the carriage to pieces, if you put him in the traces."

"But he is quiet to ride?" asked the civilian.

"As quiet as a lamb, and as fast as a hare," answered Rebecca.

"Do you think he is up to my weight?" Jos said. He was already on his back, in imagination, without ever so much as a thought for poor Amelia. What person who loved a horse speculation could resist such a temptation?

In reply, Rebecca asked him to come into her room, whither he followed her quite breathless to conclude the bargain. Jos seldom spent a half-hour in his life which

cost him so much money. Rebecca, measuring the value of the goods which she had for sale by Jos's eagerness to purchase, as well as by the scarcity of the article, put upon her horses a price so prodigious as to make even the civilian draw back. "She would sell both or neither," she said, resolutely. Rawdon had ordered her not to part with them for a price less than that which she specified. Lord Bareacres below would give her the same money—and with all her love and regard for the Sedley family, her dear Mr. Joseph must conceive that poor people must live—nobody, in a word, could be more affectionate, but more firm about the matter of business.

Jos ended by agreeing, as might be supposed of him. The sum he had to give her was so large that he was obliged to ask for time; so large as to be a little fortune to Rebecca, who rapidly calculated that with this sum, and the sale of the residue of Rawdon's effects, and her pension as a widow should he fall, she would now be absolutely independent of the world, and might look her weeds steadily in the face.

Once or twice in the day she certainly had herself thought about flying. But her reason gave her better counsel. "Suppose the French do come," thought Becky, "what can they do to a poor officer's widow? Bah! the times of sacks and sieges are over. We shall be let to go home quietly, or I may live pleasantly abroad with a snug little income."

Meanwhile Jos and Isidor went off to the stables to inspect the newly-purchased cattle. Jos bade his man saddle the horses at once. He would ride away that very night, that very hour. And he left the valet busy in getting the horses ready, and went homewards him-

self to prepare for his departure. It must be secret. He would go to his chamber by the back entrance. He did not care to face Mrs. O'Dowd and Amelia, and own to them that he was about to run.

By the time Jos's bargain with Rebecca was completed, and his horses had been visited and examined, it was almost morning once more. But though midnight was long passed, there was no rest for the city; the people were up, the lights in the houses flamed, crowds were still about the doors, and the streets were busy. Rumours of various natures went still from mouth to mouth: one report averred that the Prussians had been utterly defeated; another that it was the English who had been attacked and conquered: a third that the latter had held their ground. This last rumour gradually got strength. No Frenchmen had made their appearance. Stragglers had come in from the army bringing reports more and more favourable: at last an aide-de-camp actually reached Brussels with despatches for the Commandant of the place, who placarded presently through the town an official announcement of the success of the allies at Quatre Bras, and the entire repulse of the French under Ney after a six-hours' battle. The aide-de-camp must have arrived sometime while Jos and Rebecca were making their bargain together, or the latter was inspecting his purchase. When he reached his own hotel, he found a score of its numerous inhabitants on the threshold discoursing of the news; there was no doubt as to its truth. And he went up to communicate it to the ladies under his charge. He did not think it was necessary to tell them how he had intended to take leave of them, how he had bought horses, and what a price he had paid for them.

But success or defeat was a minor matter to them, who had only thought for the safety of those they loved. Amelia, at the news of the victory, became still more agitated even than before. She was for going that moment to the army. She besought her brother with tears to conduct her thither. Her doubts and terrors reached their paroxysm; and the poor girl, who for many hours had been plunged into stupor, raved and ran hither and thither in hysteric insanity—a piteous sight. No man writhing in pain on the hard-fought field fifteen miles off, where lay, after their struggles, so many of the brave—no man suffered more keenly than this poor harmless victim of the war. Jos could not bear the sight of her pain. He left his sister in the charge of her stouter female companion, and descended once more to the threshold of the hotel, where everybody still lingered, and talked, and waited for more news.

It grew to be broad daylight as they stood here, and fresh news began to arrive from the war, brought by men who had been actors in the scene. Wagons and long country carts laden with wounded came rolling into the town; ghastly groans came from within them, and haggard faces looked up sadly from out of the straw. Jos Sedley was looking at one of these carriages with a painful curiosity—the moans of the people within were frightful—the wearied horses could hardly pull the cart. "Stop! stop!" a feeble voice cried from the straw, and the carriage stopped opposite Mr. Sedley's hotel.

"It is George, I know it is!" cried Amelia, rushing in a moment to the balcony, with a pallid face and loose flowing hair. It was not George, however, but it was the next best thing: it was news of him.

It was poor Tom Stubble, who had marched out of Brussels so gallantly twenty-four hours before, bearing the colours of the regiment, which he had defended very gallantly upon the field. A French lancer had speared the young ensign in the leg, who fell, still bravely holding to his flag. At the conclusion of the engagement, a place had been found for the poor boy in a cart, and he had been brought back to Brussels.

"Mr. Sedley, Mr. Sedley!" cried the boy, faintly, and Jos came up almost frightened at the appeal. He had not at first distinguished who it was that called him.

Little Tom Stubble held out his hot and feeble hand. "I'm to be taken in here," he said. "Osborne—and—and Dobbin said I was; and you are to give the man two napoleons: my mother will pay you." This young fellow's thoughts, during the long feverish hours passed in the cart, had been wandering to his father's parsonage which he had quitted only a few months before, and he had sometimes forgotten his pain in that delirium.

The hotel was large, and the people kind, and all the inmates of the cart were taken in and placed on various couches. The young ensign was conveyed up stairs to Osborne's quarters. Amelia and the Major's wife had rushed down to him, when the latter had recognised him from the balcony. You may fancy the feelings of these women when they were told that the day was over, and both their husbands were safe; in what mute rapture Amelia fell on her good friend's neck, and embraced her; in what a grateful passion of prayer she fell on her knees, and thanked the Power which had saved her husband.

Our young lady, in her fevered and nervous condition, could have had no more salutary medicine pre-

scribed for her by any physician than that which chance put in her way. She and Mrs. O'Dowd watched incessantly by the wounded lad, whose pains were very severe, and in the duty thus forced upon her, Amelia had not time to brood over her personal anxieties, or to give herself up to her own fears and forebodings after her wont. The young patient told in his simple fashion the events of the day, and the actions of our friends of the gallant —th. They had suffered severely. They had lost very many officers and men. The Major's horse had been shot under him as the regiment charged, and they all thought that O'Dowd was gone, and that Dobbin had got his majority, until on their return from the charge to their old ground, the Major was discovered seated on Pyramus's carcase, refreshing himself from a case-bottle. It was Captain Osborne that cut down the French lancer who had speared the ensign. Amelia turned so pale at the notion, that Mrs. O'Dowd stopped the young ensign in this story. And it was Captain Dobbin who at the end of the day, though wounded himself, took up the lad in his arms and carried him to the surgeon, and thence to the cart which was to bring him back to Brussels. And it was he who promised the driver two louis if he would make his way to Mr. Sedley's hotel in the city; and tell Mrs. Captain Osborne that the action was over, and that her husband was unhurt and well.

"Indeed, but he has a good heart, that William Dobbin," Mrs. O'Dowd said, "though he is always laughing at me."

Young Stubble vowed there was not such another officer in the army, and never ceased his praises of the senior captain, his modesty, his kindness, and his admir-

able coolness in the field. To these parts of the conversation, Amelia lent a very distracted attention: it was only when George was spoken of that she listened, and when he was not mentioned, she thought about him.

In tending her patient, and in thinking of the wonderful escapes of the day before, her second day passed away not too slowly with Amelia. There was only one man in the army for her: and as long as he was well, it must be owned that its movements interested her little. All the reports which Jos brought from the streets fell very vaguely on her ears; though they were sufficient to give that timorous gentleman, and many other people then in Brussels, every disquiet. The French had been repulsed certainly, but it was after a severe and doubtful struggle, and with only a division of the French army. The Emperor, with the main body, was away at Ligny, where he had utterly annihilated the Prussians, and was now free to bring his whole force to bear upon the allies. The Duke of Wellington was retreating upon the capital, and a great battle must be fought under its walls probably, of which the chances were more than doubtful. The Duke of Wellington had but twenty thousand British troops on whom he could rely, for the Germans were raw militia, the Belgians disaffected; and with this handful his Grace had to resist a hundred and fifty thousand men that had broken into Belgium under Napoleon. Under Napoleon! What warrior was there, however famous and skilful, that could fight at odds with him?

Jos thought of all these things, and trembled. So did all the rest of Brussels—where people felt that the fight of the day before was but the prelude to the greater combat which was imminent. One of the armies

opposed to the Emperor was scattered to the winds already. The few English that could be brought to resist him would perish at their posts, and the conqueror would pass over their bodies into the city. Woe be to those whom he found there! Addresses were prepared, public functionaries assembled and debated secretly, apartments were got ready, and tricoloured banners and triumphal emblems manufactured, to welcome the arrival of His Majesty the Emperor and King.

The emigration still continued, and wherever families could find means of departure, they fled. When Jos, on the afternoon of the 17th of June, went to Rebecca's hotel, he found that the great Bareacres' carriage had at length rolled away from the *porte-cochère*. The Earl had procured a pair of horses somehow, in spite of Mrs. Crawley, and was rolling on the road to Ghent. Louis the Desired was getting ready his portmanteau in that city, too. It seemed as if Misfortune was never tired of worrying into motion that unwieldy exile.

Jos felt that the delay of yesterday had been only a respite, and that his dearly bought horses must of a surety be put into requisition. His agonies were very severe all this day. As long as there was an English army between Brussels and Napoleon, there was no need of immediate flight; but he had his horses brought from their distant stables, to the stables in the courtyard of the hotel where he lived; so that they might be under his own eyes, and beyond the risk of violent abduction. Isidor watched the stable-door constantly, and had the horses saddled, to be ready for the start. He longed intensely for that event.

After the reception of the previous day, Rebecca did not care to come near her dear Amelia. She clipped the

bouquet which George had brought her, and gave fresh water to the flowers, and read over the letter which he had sent her. "Poor wretch," she said, twirling round the little bit of paper in her fingers, "how I could crush her with this!—and it is for a thing like this that she must break her heart, forsooth—for a man who is stupid —a coxcomb—and who does not care for her. My poor good Rawdon is worth ten of this creature." And then she fell to thinking what she should do if—if anything happened to poor good Rawdon, and what a great piece of luck it was that he had left his horses behind.

In the course of this day too, Mrs. Crawley, who saw not without anger the Bareacres party drive off, bethought her of the precaution which the countess had taken, and did a little needlework for her own advantage; she stitched away the major part of her trinkets, bills, and bank-notes about her person, and so prepared, was ready for any event—to fly if she thought fit, or to stay and welcome the conqueror, were he Englishman or Frenchman. And I am not sure that she did not dream that night of becoming a duchess and Madame la Maréchale, while Rawdon wrapped in his cloak, and making his bivouac under the rain at Mount Saint John, was thinking, with all the force of his heart, about the little wife whom he had left behind him.

The next day was a Sunday. And Mrs. Major O'Dowd had the satisfaction of seeing both her patients refreshed in health and spirits by some rest which they had taken during the night. She herself had slept on a great chair in Amelia's room, ready to wait upon her poor friend or the ensign, should either need her nursing. When morning came, this robust woman went back to the house where she and her Major had their

billet; and here performed an elaborate and splendid toilette, befitting the day. And it is very possible that whilst alone in that chamber, which her husband had inhabited, and where his cap still lay on the pillow, and his cane stood in the corner, one prayer at least was sent up to Heaven for the welfare of the brave soldier, Michael O'Dowd.

When she returned she brought her prayer-book with her, and her uncle the Dean's famous book of sermons, out of which she never failed to read every Sabbath; not understanding all, haply, not pronouncing many of the words aright, which were long and abstruse—for the Dean was a learned man, and loved long Latin words—but with great gravity, vast emphasis, and with tolerable correctness in the main. How often has my Mick listened to these sermons, she thought, and me reading in the cabin of a calm! She proposed to resume this exercise on the present day, with Amelia and the wounded ensign for a congregation. The same service was read on that day in twenty thousand churches at the same hour; and millions of British men and women, on their knees, implored protection of the Father of all.

They did not hear the noise which disturbed our little congregation at Brussels. Much louder than that which had interrupted them two days previously, as Mrs. O'Dowd was reading the service in her best voice, the cannon of Waterloo began to roar.

When Jos heard that dreadful sound, he made up his mind that he would bear this perpetual recurrence of terrors no longer, and would fly at once. He rushed into the sick man's room, where our three friends had paused in their prayers, and further interrupted them by a passionate appeal to Amelia.

"I can't stand it any more, Emmy," he said; "I won't stand it; and you must come with me. I have bought a horse for you—never mind at what price—and you must dress and come with me, and ride behind Isidor."

"God forgive me, Mr. Sedley, but you are no better than a coward," Mrs. O'Dowd said, laying down the book.

"I say come, Amelia," the civilian went on; "never mind what she says; why are we to stop here and be butchered by the Frenchmen?"

"You forget the —th, my boy," said the little Stubble, the wounded hero, from his bed—"and—and you won't leave me, will you, Mrs. O'Dowd?"

"No, my dear fellow," said she, going up and kissing the boy. "No harm shall come to you while *I* stand by. I don't budge till I get the word from Mick. A pretty figure I'd be, wouldn't I, stuck behind that chap on a pillion?"

This image caused the young patient to burst out laughing in his bed and even made Amelia smile. "I don't ask her," Jos shouted out—"I don't ask that—that Irishwoman, but you, Amelia; once for all, will you come?"

"Without my husband, Joseph?" Amelia said, with a look of wonder, and gave her hand to the Major's wife. Jos's patience was exhausted.

"Good bye, then," he said, shaking his fist in a rage, and slamming the door by which he retreated. And this time he really gave his order for march: and mounted in the court-yard. Mrs. O'Dowd heard the clattering hoofs of the horses as they issued from the gate; and looking on, made many scornful remarks on poor Joseph as he rode down the street with Isidor after him

in the laced cap. The horses, which had not been exercised for some days, were lively, and sprang about the street. Jos, a clumsy and timid horseman, did not look to advantage in the saddle. "Look at him, Amelia dear, driving into the parlour window. Such a bull in a china-shop *I* never saw." And presently the pair of riders disappeared at a canter down the street leading in the direction of the Ghent road, Mrs. O'Dowd pursuing them with a fire of sarcasm so long as they were in sight.

All that day from morning until past sunset, the cannon never ceased to roar. It was dark when the cannonading stopped all of a sudden.

All of us have read of what occurred during that interval. The tale is in every Englishman's mouth; and you and I, who were children when the great battle was won and lost, are never tired of hearing and recounting the history of that famous action. Its remembrance rankles still in the bosoms of millions of the countrymen of those brave men who lost the day. They pant for an opportunity of revenging that humiliation; and if a contest, ending in a victory on their part, should ensue, elating them in their turn, and leaving its cursed legacy of hatred and rage behind to us, there is no end to the so-called glory and shame, and to the alternations of successful and unsuccessful murder, in which two high-spirited nations might engage. Centuries hence, we Frenchmen and Englishmen might be boasting and killing each other still, carrying out bravely the Devil's code of honour.

All our friends took their share and fought like men in the great field. All day long, whilst the women were praying ten miles away, the lines of the dauntless Eng-

Mr. Jos shaves off
his moustachios

lish infantry were receiving and repelling the furious charges of the French horsemen. Guns which were heard at Brussels were ploughing up their ranks, and comrades falling, and the resolute survivors closing in. Towards evening, the attack of the French, repeated and resisted so bravely, slackened in its fury. They had other foes besides the British to engage, or were preparing for a final onset. It came at last: the columns of the Imperial Guard marched up the hill of Saint Jean, at length and at once to sweep the English from the height which they had maintained all day, and spite of all: unscared by the thunder of the artillery, which hurled death from the English line—the dark rolling column pressed on and up the hill. It seemed almost to crest the eminence, when it began to wave and falter. Then it stopped, still facing the shot. Then at last the English troops rushed from the post from which no enemy had been able to dislodge them, and the Guard turned and fled.

No more firing was heard at Brussels—the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city: and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.

CHAPTER XXXIII

IN WHICH MISS CRAWLEY'S RELATIONS ARE VERY ANXIOUS ABOUT HER

THE kind reader must please to remember — while the army is marching from Flanders, and, after its heroic actions there, is advancing to take the fortifications on the frontiers of France, previous to an occupation of that country, —that there are a number of persons living peaceably in England who have to do with the history at present in hand, and must come in for their share of the chronicle. During the time of these battles and dangers, old Miss Crawley was living at Brighton, very moderately moved by the great events that were going on. The great events rendered the newspapers rather interesting, to be sure, and Briggs read out the *Gazette,* in which Rawdon Crawley's gallantry was mentioned with honour, and his promotion was presently recorded.

"What a pity that young man has taken such an irretrievable step in the world!" his aunt said; "with his rank and distinction he might have married a brewer's daughter with a quarter of a million—like Miss Grains; or have looked to ally himself with the best families in

England. He would have had my money some day or other; or his children would—for I'm not in a hurry to go, Miss Briggs, although you may be in a hurry to be rid of me; and instead of that, he is a doomed pauper, with a dancing-girl for a wife."

"Will my dear Miss Crawley not cast an eye of compassion upon the heroic soldier, whose name is inscribed in the annals of his country's glory?" said Miss Briggs, who was greatly excited by the Waterloo proceedings, and loved speaking romantically when there was an occasion. "Has not the Captain—or the Colonel as I may now style him—done deeds which make the name of Crawley illustrious?"

"Briggs, you are a fool," said Miss Crawley: "Colonel Crawley has dragged the name of Crawley through the mud, Miss Briggs. Marry a drawing-master's daughter, indeed!—marry a *dame de compagnie*—for she was no better, Briggs; no, she was just what you are —only younger, and a great deal prettier and cleverer. Were you an accomplice of that abandoned wretch, I wonder, of whose vile arts he became a victim, and of whom you used to be such an admirer? Yes, I daresay you were an accomplice. But you will find yourself disappointed in my will, I can tell you: and you will have the goodness to write to Mr. Waxy, and say that I desire to see him immediately." Miss Crawley was now in the habit of writing to Mr. Waxy her solicitor almost every day in the week, for her arrangements respecting her property were all revoked, and her perplexity was great as to the future disposition of her money.

The spinster had, however, rallied considerably; as was proved by the increased vigour and frequency of her sarcasms upon Miss Briggs, all which attacks the poor

companion bore with meekness, with cowardice, with a resignation that was half generous and half hypocritical —with the slavish submission, in a word, that women of her disposition and station are compelled to show. Who has not seen how women bully women? What tortures have men to endure, comparable to those daily repeated shafts of scorn and cruelty with which poor women are riddled by the tyrants of their sex? Poor victims! But we are starting from our proposition, which is, that Miss Crawley was always particularly annoying and savage when she was rallying from illness—as they say wounds tingle most when they are about to heal.

While thus approaching, as all hoped, to convalescence, Miss Briggs was the only victim admitted into the presence of the invalid; yet Miss Crawley's relatives afar off did not forget their beloved kinswoman, and by a number of tokens, presents, and kind affectionate messages, strove to keep themselves alive in her recollection.

In the first place, let us mention her nephew, Rawdon Crawley. A few weeks after the famous fight of Waterloo, and after the *Gazette* had made known to her the promotion and gallantry of that distinguished officer, the Dieppe packet brought over to Miss Crawley at Brighton, a box containing presents, and a dutiful letter, from the Colonel her nephew. In the box were a pair of French epaulets, a Cross of the Legion of Honour, and the hilt of a sword—relics from the field of battle: and the letter described with a good deal of humour how the latter belonged to a commanding-officer of the Guard, who having sworn that "the Guard died, but never surrendered," was taken prisoner the next minute by a private soldier, who broke the Frenchman's sword with the butt of his musket, when

Rawdon made himself master of the shattered weapon. As for the cross and epaulets, they came from a Colonel of French cavalry, who had fallen under the aide-de-camp's arm in the battle: and Rawdon Crawley did not know what better to do with the spoils than to send them to his kindest and most affectionate old friend. Should he continue to write to her from Paris, whither the army was marching? He might be able to give her interesting news from that capital, and of some of Miss Crawley's old friends of the emigration, to whom she had shown so much kindness during their distress.

The spinster caused Briggs to write back to the Colonel a gracious and complimentary letter, encouraging him to continue his correspondence. His first letter was so excessively lively and amusing that she should look with pleasure for its successors.—"Of course, I know," she explained to Miss Briggs, "that Rawdon could not write such a good letter any more than you could, my poor Briggs, and that it is that clever little wretch of a Rebecca, who dictates every word to him; but that is no reason why my nephew should not amuse me; and so I wish to let him understand that I am in high good-humour."

I wonder whether she knew that it was not only Becky who wrote the letters, but that Mrs. Rawdon actually took and sent home the trophies—which she bought for a few francs, from one of the innumerable pedlars who immediately began to deal in relics of the war. The novelist, who knows everything, knows this also. Be this, however, as it may, Miss Crawley's gracious reply greatly encouraged our young friends, Rawdon and his lady, who hoped for the best from their aunt's evidently pacified humour: and they took care to

entertain her with many delightful letters from Paris, whither, as Rawdon said, they had the good luck to go in the track of the conquering army.

To the Rector's lady, who went off to tend her husband's broken collar-bone at the Rectory at Queen's Crawley, the spinster's communications were by no means so gracious. Mrs. Bute, that brisk, managing, lively, imperious woman, had committed the most fatal of all errors with regard to her sister-in-law. She had not merely oppressed her and her household—she had bored Miss Crawley; and if poor Miss Briggs had been a woman of any spirit, she might have been made happy by the commission which her principal gave her to write a letter to Mrs. Bute Crawley, saying that Miss Crawley's health was greatly improved since Mrs. Bute had left her, and begging the latter on no account to put herself to trouble, or quit her family for Miss Crawley's sake. This triumph over a lady who had been very haughty and cruel in her behaviour to Miss Briggs, would have rejoiced most women; but the truth is, Briggs was a woman of no spirit at all, and the moment her enemy was discomfited, she began to feel compassion in her favour.

"How silly I was," Mrs. Bute thought, and with reason, "ever to hint that I was coming, as I did, in that foolish letter when we sent Miss Crawley the guinea-fowls. I ought to have gone without a word to the poor dear doting old creature, and taken her out of the hands of that ninny Briggs, and that harpy of a *femme de chambre*. Oh! Bute, Bute, why did you break your collar-bone?"

Why, indeed? We have seen how Mrs. Bute, having the game in her hands, had really played her cards too

well. She had ruled over Miss Crawley's household utterly and completely, to be utterly and completely routed when a favourable opportunity for rebellion came. She and her household, however, considered that she had been the victim of horrible selfishness and treason, and that her sacrifices in Miss Crawley's behalf had met with the most savage ingratitude. Rawdon's promotion, and the honourable mention made of his name in the *Gazette,* filled this good Christian lady also with alarm. Would his aunt relent towards him now that he was a Lieutenant-Colonel and a C.B.? and would that odious Rebecca once more get into favour? The Rector's wife wrote a sermon for her husband about the vanity of military glory and the prosperity of the wicked, which the worthy parson read in his best voice and without understanding one syllable of it. He had Pitt Crawley for one of his auditors—Pitt, who had come with his two half-sisters to church, which the old Baronet could now by no means be brought to frequent.

Since the departure of Becky Sharp, that old wretch had given himself up entirely to his bad courses, to the great scandal of the county and the mute horror of his son. The ribbons in Miss Horrocks's cap became more splendid than ever. The polite families fled the hall and its owner in terror. Sir Pitt went about tippling at his tenants' houses; and drank rum-and-water with the farmers at Mudbury and the neighbouring places on market-days. He drove the family coach-and-four to Southampton with Miss Horrocks inside: and the county people expected, every week, as his son did in speechless agony, that his marriage with her would be announced in the provincial paper. It was indeed a rude burthen for Mr. Crawley to bear. His eloquence was

palsied at the missionary meetings, and other religious assemblies in the neighbourhood, where he had been in the habit of presiding, and of speaking for hours; for he felt, when he rose, that the audience said, "That is the son of the old reprobate Sir Pitt, who is very likely drinking at the public-house at this very moment." And once when he was speaking of the benighted condition of the king of Timbuctoo, and the number of his wives who were likewise in darkness, some gipsy miscreant from the crowd asked, "How many is there at Queen's Crawley, Young Squaretoes?" to the surprise of the platform, and the ruin of Mr. Pitt's speech. And the two daughters of the house of Queen's Crawley would have been allowed to run utterly wild (for Sir Pitt swore that no governess should ever enter into his doors again), had not Mr. Crawley, by threatening the old gentleman, forced the latter to send them to school.

Meanwhile, as we have said, whatever individual differences there might be between them all, Miss Crawley's dear nephews and nieces were unanimous in loving her and sending her tokens of affection. Thus Mrs. Bute sent guinea-fowls, and some remarkably fine cauliflowers, and a pretty purse or pincushion worked by her darling girls, who begged to keep a *little* place in the recollection of their dear aunt, while Mr. Pitt sent peaches and grapes and venison from the Hall. The Southampton coach used to carry these tokens of affection to Miss Crawley at Brighton: it used sometimes to convey Mr. Pitt thither too: for his differences with Sir Pitt caused Mr. Crawley to absent himself a good deal from home now: and besides, he had an attraction at Brighton in the person of the Lady Jane Sheepshanks, whose engagement to Mr. Crawley has been formerly mentioned in this history. Her Ladyship and her sis-

ters lived at Brighton with their mamma, the Countess Southdown, that strong-minded woman so favourably known in the serious world.

A few words ought to be said regarding her Ladyship and her noble family, who are bound by ties of present and future relationship to the house of Crawley. Respecting the chief of the Southdown family, Clement William, fourth Earl of Southdown, little need be told, except that his Lordship came into Parliament (as Lord Wolsey) under the auspices of Mr. Wilberforce, and for a time was a credit to his political sponsor, and decidedly a serious young man. But words cannot describe the feelings of his admirable mother, when she learned, very shortly after her noble husband's demise, that her son was a member of several worldly clubs, had lost largely at play at Wattier's and the Cocoa-Tree; that he had raised money on post-obits, and encumbered the family estate; that he drove four-in-hand, and patronised the ring; and that he actually had an opera-box, where he entertained the most dangerous bachelor company. His name was only mentioned with groans in the dowager's circle.

The Lady Emily was her brother's senior by many years; and took considerable rank in the serious world as author of some of the delightful tracts before mentioned, and of many hymns and spiritual pieces. A mature spinster, and having but faint ideas of marriage, her love for the blacks occupied almost all her feelings. It is to her, I believe, we owe that beautiful poem—

> "Lead us to some sunny isle,
> Yonder in the western deep;
> Where the skies for ever smile,
> And the blacks for ever weep," &c.

She had correspondences with clerical gentlemen in most of our East and West India possessions; and was secretly attached to the Reverend Silas Hornblower, who was tattooed in the South Sea Islands.

As for the Lady Jane, on whom, as it has been said, Mr. Pitt Crawley's affection had been placed, she was gentle, blushing, silent, and timid. In spite of his falling away, she wept for her brother, and was quite ashamed of loving him still. Even yet she used to send him little hurried smuggled notes, and pop them into the post in private. The one dreadful secret which weighed upon her life was, that she and the old housekeeper had been to pay Southdown a furtive visit at his chambers in the Albany; and found him—O the naughty dear abandoned wretch!—smoking a cigar with a bottle of Curaçoa before him. She admired her sister, she adored her mother, she thought Mr. Crawley the most delightful and accomplished of men, after Southdown, that fallen angel: and her mamma and sister, who were ladies of the most superior sort, managed everything for her, and regarded her with that amiable pity, of which your really superior woman always has such a share to give away. Her mamma ordered her dresses, her books, her bonnets, and her ideas for her. She was made to take pony-riding, or piano-exercise, or any other sort of bodily medicament, according as my Lady Southdown saw meet; and her ladyship would have kept her daughter in pinafores up to her present age of six-and-twenty, but that they were thrown off when Lady Jane was presented to Queen Charlotte.

When these ladies first came to their house at Brighton, it was to them alone that Mr. Crawley paid

his personal visits, contenting himself by leaving a card at his aunt's house, and making a modest inquiry of Mr. Bowls or his assistant footman, with respect to the health of the invalid. When he met Miss Briggs coming home from the library with a cargo of novels under her arm, Mr. Crawley blushed in a manner quite unusual to him, as he stepped forward and shook Miss Crawley's companion by the hand. He introduced Miss Briggs to the lady with whom he happened to be walking, the Lady Jane Sheepshanks, saying, "Lady Jane, permit me to introduce to you my aunt's kindest friend and most affectionate companion, Miss Briggs, whom you know under another title, as authoress of the delightful 'Lyrics of the Heart,' of which you are so fond." Lady Jane blushed too as she held out a kind little hand to Miss Briggs, and said something very civil and incoherent about mamma, and proposing to call on Miss Crawley, and being glad to be made known to the friends and relatives of Mr. Crawley; and with soft dove-like eyes saluted Miss Briggs as they separated, while Pitt Crawley treated her to a profound courtly bow, such as he had used to H. H. the Duchess of Pumpernickel, when he was attaché at that court.

The artful diplomatist and disciple of the Machiavellian Binkie! It was he who had given Lady Jane that copy of poor Briggs's early poems, which he remembered to have seen at Queen's Crawley, with a dedication from the poetess to his father's late wife; and he brought the volume with him to Brighton, reading it in the Southampton coach and marking it with his own pencil, before he presented it to the gentle Lady Jane.

It was he, too, who laid before Lady Southdown the great advantages which might occur from an intimacy

between her family and Miss Crawley,—advantages both worldly and spiritual, he said: for Miss Crawley was now quite alone; the monstrous dissipation and alli-

ance of his brother Rawdon had estranged her affections from that reprobate young man; the greedy tyranny and avarice of Mrs. Bute Crawley had caused the old lady to revolt against the exorbitant pretensions of that part of the family; and though he himself had held off all his life from cultivating Miss Crawley's friendship, with perhaps an improper pride, he

thought now that every becoming means should be taken, both to save her soul from perdition, and to secure her fortune to himself as the head of the house of Crawley.

The strong-minded Lady Southdown quite agreed in both proposals of her son-in-law, and was for converting Miss Crawley off hand. At her own home, both at Southdown and at Trottermore Castle, this tall and awful missionary of the truth rode about the country in her barouche with outriders, launched packets of tracts among the cottagers and tenants, and would order Gaffer Jones to be converted, as she would order Goody Hicks to take a James's powder, without appeal, resistance, or benefit of clergy. My Lord Southdown, her late husband, an epileptic and simple-minded nobleman, was in the habit of approving of everything which his Matilda did and thought. So that whatever changes her own belief might undergo (and it accommodated itself to a prodigious variety of opinion, taken from all sorts of doctors among the Dissenters) she had not the least scruple in ordering all her tenants and inferiors to follow and believe after her. Thus whether she received the Reverend Saunders McNitre, the Scotch divine; or the Reverend Luke Waters, the mild Wesleyan; or the Reverend Giles Jowls, the illuminated Cobbler, who dubbed himself Reverend as Napoleon crowned himself Emperor—the household, children, tenantry of my Lady Southdown were expected to go down on their knees with her Ladyship, and say Amen to the prayers of either Doctor. During these exercises old Southdown, on account of his invalid condition, was allowed to sit in his own room, and have negus and the paper read to him. Lady Jane was the

old Earl's favourite daughter, and tended him and loved him sincerely: as for Lady Emily, the authoress of the "Washerwoman of Finchley Common," her denunciations of future punishment (at this period, for her opinions modified afterwards) were so awful that they used to frighten the timid old gentleman her father, and the physicians declared his fits always occurred after one of her Ladyship's sermons.

"I will certainly call," said Lady Southdown then, in reply to the exhortation of her daughter's *prétendu*, Mr. Pitt Crawley—"Who is Miss Crawley's medical man?"

Mr. Crawley mentioned the name of Mr. Creamer.

"A most dangerous and ignorant practitioner, my dear Pitt. I have providentially been the means of removing him from several houses: though in one or two instances I did not arrive in time. I could not save poor dear General Glanders, who was dying under the hands of that ignorant man—dying. He rallied a little under the Podgers' pills which I administered to him; but alas! it was too late. His death was delightful, however; and his change was only for the better; Creamer, my dear Pitt, must leave your aunt."

Pitt expressed his perfect acquiescence. He, too, had been carried along by the energy of his noble kinswoman, and future mother-in-law. He had been made to accept Saunders McNitre, Luke Waters, Giles Jowls, Podgers' Pills, Rodgers' Pills, Pokey's Elixir, every one of her Ladyship's remedies spiritual or temporal. He never left her house without carrying respectfully away with him piles of her quack theology and medicine. O, my dear brethren and fellow-sojourners in Vanity Fair, which among you does not know and suffer under such benevolent despots? It is in vain you say to them,

"Dear Madam, I took Podgers' specific at your orders last year, and believe in it. Why, why am I to recant and accept the Rodgers' articles now?" There is no help for it; the faithful proselytizer, if she cannot convince by argument, bursts into tears, and the recusant finds himself, at the end of the contest, taking down the bolus, and saying, "Well, well, Rodgers' be it."

"And as for her spiritual state," continued the Lady, "that of course must be looked to immediately; with Creamer about her, she may go off any day: and in what a condition, my dear Pitt, in what a dreadful condition! I will send the Reverend Mr. Irons to her instantly. Jane, write a line to the Reverend Bartholomew Irons, in the third person, and say that I desire the pleasure of his company this evening at tea at half-past six. He is an awakening man; he ought to see Miss Crawley before she rests this night. And Emily, my love, get ready a packet of books for Miss Crawley. Put up 'A Voice from the Flames,' 'A Trumpet-warning to Jericho,' and the 'Fleshpots Broken; or, the Converted Cannibal.'"

"And the 'Washerwoman of Finchley Common,' Mamma," said Lady Emily. "It is as well to begin soothingly at first."

"Stop, my dear ladies," said Pitt, the diplomatist. "With every deference to the opinion of my beloved and respected Lady Southdown, I think it would be quite unadvisable to commence so early upon serious topics with Miss Crawley. Remember her delicate condition, and how little, how *very* little accustomed she has hitherto been to considerations connected with her immortal welfare."

"Can we then begin too early, Pitt?" said Lady Emily, rising with six little books already in her hand.

"If you begin abruptly, you will frighten her altogether. I know my aunt's worldly nature so well as to be sure that any abrupt attempt at conversion will be the very worst means that can be employed for the welfare of that unfortunate lady. You will only frighten and annoy her. She will very likely fling the books away, and refuse all acquaintance with the givers."

"You are as worldly as Miss Crawley, Pitt," said Lady Emily, tossing out of the room, her books in her hand.

"And I need not tell you, my dear Lady Southdown," Pitt continued, in a low voice, and without heeding the interruption, "how fatal a little want of gentleness and caution may be to any hopes which we may entertain with regard to the worldly possessions of my aunt. Remember she has seventy thousand pounds; think of her age, and her highly nervous and delicate condition; I know that she has destroyed the will which was made in my brother's (Colonel Crawley's) favour: it is by soothing that wounded spirit that we must lead it into the right path, and not by frightening it; and so I think you will agree with me that—that—"

"Of course, of course," Lady Southdown remarked. "Jane, my love, you need not send that note to Mr. Irons. If her health is such that discussions fatigue her, we will wait her amendment. I will call upon Miss Crawley to-morrow."

"And if I might suggest, my sweet lady," Pitt said in a bland tone, "it would be as well not to take our precious Emily, who is too enthusiastic; but rather that you should be accompanied by our sweet and dear Lady Jane."

"Most certainly, Emily would ruin everything,"

Lady Southdown said; and this time agreed to forego her usual practice, which was, as we have said, before she bore down personally upon any individual whom she proposed to subjugate, to fire in a quantity of tracts upon the menaced party; (as a charge of the French was always preceded by a furious cannonade). Lady Southdown, we say, for the sake of the invalid's health, or for the sake of her soul's ultimate welfare, or for the sake of her money, agreed to temporise.

The next day, the great Southdown female family carriage, with the Earl's coronet and the lozenge (upon which the three lambs trottant argent upon the field vert of the Southdowns, were quartered with sable on a bend or, three snuff-mules gules, the cognizance of the house of Binkie), drove up in state to Miss Crawley's door, and the tall serious footman handed in to Mr. Bowls her Ladyship's cards for Miss Crawley, and one likewise for Miss Briggs. By way of compromise, Lady Emily sent in a packet in the evening for the latter lady, containing copies of the "Washerwoman," and other mild and favourite tracts for Miss B.'s own perusal; and a few for the servants' hall, viz.: "Crumbs from the Pantry," "The Frying Pan and the Fire," and "The Livery of Sin," of a much stronger kind.

CHAPTER XXXIV

JAMES CRAWLEY'S PIPE IS PUT OUT

THE amiable behaviour of Mr. Crawley, and Lady Jane's kind reception of her, highly flattered Miss Briggs, who was enabled to speak a good word for the latter, after the cards of the Southdown family had been presented to Miss Crawley. A Countess's card left personally too for her, Briggs, was not a little pleasing to the poor friendless companion. "What could Lady Southdown mean by leaving a card upon *you,* I wonder, Miss Briggs?" said the republican Miss Crawley; upon which the companion meekly said "that she hoped there could be no harm in a lady of rank taking notice of a poor gentlewoman," and she put away this card in her work-box amongst her most cherished personal treasures. Furthermore, Miss Briggs explained how she had met Mr. Crawley walking with his cousin and long-affianced bride the day before: and she told how kind and gentle-looking the lady was, and what a plain, not to say common, dress she had, all the articles of which, from the bonnet down to the boots, she described and estimated with female accuracy.

Miss Crawley allowed Briggs to prattle on without

interrupting her too much. As she got well, she was pining for society. Mr. Creamer, her medical man, would not hear of her returning to her old haunts and dissipation in London. The old spinster was too glad to find any companionship at Brighton, and not only were the cards acknowledged the very next day, but Pitt Crawley was graciously invited to come and see his aunt. He came, bringing with him Lady Southdown and her daughter. The dowager did not say a word about the state of Miss Crawley's soul; but talked with much discretion about the weather: about the war and the downfall of the monster Bonaparte: and above all, about doctors, quacks, and the particular merits of Dr. Podgers, whom she then patronised.

During their interview Pitt Crawley made a great stroke, and one which showed that, had his diplomatic career not been blighted by early neglect, he might have risen to a high rank in his profession. When the Countess Dowager of Southdown fell foul of the Corsican upstart, as the fashion was in those days, and showed that he was a monster stained with every conceivable crime, a coward and a tyrant not fit to live, one whose fall was predicted, &c., Pitt Crawley suddenly took up the cudgels in favour of the man of Destiny. He described the First Consul as he saw him at Paris at the Peace of Amiens; when he, Pitt Crawley, had the gratification of making the acquaintance of the great and good Mr. Fox, a statesman whom, however much he might differ with him, it was impossible not to admire fervently—a statesman who had always had the highest opinion of the Emperor Napoleon. And he spoke in terms of the strongest indignation of the faithless conduct of the allies towards this dethroned monarch, who,

after giving himself generously up to their mercy, was consigned to an ignoble and cruel banishment, while a bigoted Popish rabble was tyrannising over France in his stead.

This orthodox horror of Romish superstition saved Pitt Crawley in Lady Southdown's opinion, whilst his admiration for Fox and Napoleon raised him immeasurably in Miss Crawley's eyes. Her friendship with that defunct British statesman was mentioned when we first introduced her in this history. A true Whig, Miss Crawley had been in opposition all through the war, and though, to be sure, the downfall of the Emperor did not very much agitate the old lady, or his ill-treatment tend to shorten her life or natural rest, yet Pitt spoke to her heart when he lauded both her idols; and by that single speech made immense progress in her favour.

"And what do you think, my dear?" Miss Crawley said to the young lady, for whom she had taken a liking at first sight, as she always did for pretty and modest young people; though it must be owned her affections cooled as rapidly as they rose.

Lady Jane blushed very much, and said "that she did not understand politics, which she left to wiser heads than hers; but though Mamma was, no doubt, correct, Mr. Crawley had spoken beautifully." And when the ladies were retiring at the conclusion of their visit, Miss Crawley hoped "Lady Southdown would be so kind as to send her Lady Jane sometimes, if she could be spared to come down and console a poor sick lonely old woman." This promise was graciously accorded, and they separated upon great terms of amity.

"Don't let Lady Southdown come again, Pitt," said the old lady. "She is stupid and pompous, like all your

mother's family, whom I never could endure. But bring that nice good-natured little Jane as often as ever you please." Pitt promised that he would do so. He did not tell the Countess of Southdown what opinion his aunt had formed of her Ladyship, who, on the contrary, thought that she had made a most delightful and majestic impression on Miss Crawley.

And so, nothing loth to comfort a sick lady, and perhaps not sorry in her heart to be freed now and again from the dreary spouting of the Reverend Bartholomew Irons, and the serious toadies who gathered round the footstool of the pompous Countess, her mamma, Lady Jane became a pretty constant visitor to Miss Crawley, accompanied her in her drives, and solaced many of her evenings. She was so naturally good and soft, that even Firkin was not jealous of her; and the gentle Briggs thought her friend was less cruel to her, when kind Lady Jane was by. Towards her Ladyship Miss Crawley's manners were charming. The old spinster told her a thousand anecdotes about her youth, talking to her in a very different strain from that in which she had been accustomed to converse with the godless little Rebecca; for there was that in Lady Jane's innocence which rendered light talking impertinence before her, and Miss Crawley was too much of a gentlewoman to offend such purity. The young lady herself had never received kindness except from this old spinster, and her brother and father: and she repaid Miss Crawley's *engoûment* by artless sweetness and friendship.

In the autumn evenings (when Rebecca was flaunting at Paris, the gayest among the gay conquerors there, and our Amelia, our dear wounded Amelia, ah! where was she?) Lady Jane would be sitting in Miss

Crawley's drawing-room singing sweetly to her, in the twilight, her little simple songs and hymns, while the sun was setting and the sea was roaring on the beach. The old spinster used to wake up when these ditties ceased, and ask for more. As for Briggs, and the quantity of tears of happiness which she now shed as she pretended to knit, and looked out at the splendid ocean darkling before the windows, and the lamps of heaven beginning more brightly to shine—who, I say, can measure the happiness and sensibility of Briggs?

Pitt meanwhile in the dining-room, with a pamphlet on the Corn Laws or a Missionary Register by his side, took that kind of recreation which suits romantic and unromantic men after dinner. He sipped Madeira: built castles in the air: thought himself a fine fellow: felt himself much more in love with Jane than he had been any time these seven years, during which their *liaison* had lasted without the slightest impatience on Pitt's part—and slept a good deal. When the time for coffee came, Mr. Bowls used to enter in a noisy manner, and summon Squire Pitt, who would be found in the dark very busy with his pamphlet.

"I wish, my love, I could get somebody to play piquet with me," Miss Crawley said one night when this functionary made his appearance with the candles and the coffee. "Poor Briggs can no more play than an owl, she is so stupid" (the spinster always took an opportunity of abusing Briggs before the servants); "and I think I should sleep better if I had my game."

At this Lady Jane blushed to the tips of her little ears, and down to the ends of her pretty fingers; and when Mr. Bowls had quitted the room, and the door was quite shut, she said:

"Miss Crawley, I can play a little. I used to—to play a little with poor dear papa."

"Come and kiss me. Come and kiss me this instant, you dear good little soul," cried Miss Crawley in an ecstacy: and in this picturesque and friendly occupation Mr. Pitt found the old lady and the young one, when he came up stairs with his pamphlet in his hand. How she did blush all the evening, that poor Lady Jane!

It must not be imagined that Mr. Pitt Crawley's artifices escaped the attention of his dear relations at the Rectory at Queen's Crawley. Hampshire and Sussex lie very close together, and Mrs. Bute had friends in the latter county who took care to inform her of all, and a great deal more than all, that passed at Miss Crawley's house at Brighton. Pitt was there more and more. He did not come for months together to the Hall, where his abominable old father abandoned himself completely to rum-and-water, and the odious society of the Horrocks family. Pitt's success rendered the Rector's family furious, and Mrs. Bute regretted more (though she confessed less) than ever her monstrous fault in so insulting Miss Briggs, and in being so haughty and parsimonious to Bowls and Firkin, that she had not a single person left in Miss Crawley's household to give her information of what took place there. "It was all Bute's collar-bone," she persisted in saying; "if that had not broke, I never would have left her. I am a martyr to duty and to your odious unclerical habit of hunting, Bute."

"Hunting; nonsense! It was you that frightened her, Barbara," the divine interposed. "You're a clever

woman, but you've got a devil of a temper; and you're a screw with your money, Barbara."

"You'd have been screwed in gaol, Bute, if I had not kept your money."

"I know I would, my dear," said the Rector, good-naturedly. "You *are* a clever woman, but you manage too well, you know:" and the pious man consoled himself with a big glass of port.

"What the deuce can she find in that spooney of a Pitt Crawley?" he continued. "The fellow has not pluck enough to say Bo to a goose. I remember when Rawdon, who *is* a man, and be hanged to him, used to flog him round the stables as if he was a whipping-top: and Pitt would go howling home to his ma—ha, ha! Why, either of my boys would whop him with one hand. Jim says he's remembered at Oxford as Miss Crawley still—the spooney."

"I say, Barbara," his reverence continued, after a pause.

"What?" said Barbara, who was biting her nails, and drumming the table.

"I say, why not send Jim over to Brighton to see if he can do anything with the old lady. He's very near getting his degree, you know. He's only been plucked twice—so was I—but he's had the advantages of Oxford and a university education. He knows some of the best chaps there. He pulls stroke in the Boniface boat. He's a handsome feller. D— it, ma'am, let's put him on the old woman, hey; and tell him to thrash Pitt if he says anythink. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jim might go down and see her, certainly," the housewife said; adding with a sigh, "If we could but get one of the girls into the house; but she could never

endure them, because they are not pretty!" Those unfortunate and well-educated women made themselves heard from the neighbouring drawing-room, where they were thrumming away, with hard fingers, an elaborate music-piece on the pianoforte, as their mother spoke; and indeed, they were at music, or at backboard, or at geography, or at history, the whole day long. But what avail all these accomplishments, in Vanity Fair, to girls who are short, poor, plain, and have a bad complexion? Mrs. Bute could think of nobody but the Curate to take one of them off her hands; and Jim coming in from the stable at this minute, through the parlour window, with a short pipe stuck in his oil-skin cap, he and his father fell to talking about odds on the St. Leger, and the colloquy between the Rector and his wife ended.

Mrs. Bute did not augur much good to the cause from the sending of her son James as an ambassador, and saw him depart in rather a despairing mood. Nor did the young fellow himself, when told what his mission was to be, expect much pleasure or benefit from it; but he was consoled by the thought that possibly the old lady would give him some handsome remembrance of her, which would pay a few of his most pressing bills at the commencement of the ensuing Oxford term, and so took his place by the coach from Southampton, and was safely landed at Brighton on the same evening, with his portmanteau, his favourite bull-dog Towzer, and an immense basket of farm and garden produce, from the dear Rectory folks to the dear Miss Crawley. Considering it was too late to disturb the invalid lady on the first night of his arrival, he put up at an inn, and did not wait upon Miss Crawley until a late hour in the noon of next day.

James Crawley, when his aunt had last beheld him, was a gawky lad, at that uncomfortable age when the voice varies between an unearthly treble and a preternatural bass; when the face not uncommonly blooms out with appearances for which Rowland's Kalydor is said to act as a cure; when boys are seen to shave furtively with their sisters' scissors, and the sight of other young women produces intolerable sensations of terror in them; when the great hands and ankles protrude a long way from garments which have grown too tight for them; when their presence after dinner is at once frightful to the ladies, who are whispering in the twilight in the drawing-room, and inexpressibly odious to the gentlemen over the mahogany, who are restrained from freedom of intercourse and delightful interchange of wit by the presence of that gawky innocence; when, at the conclusion of the second glass, papa says, "Jack, my boy, go out and see if the evening holds up," and the youth, willing to be free, yet hurt at not being yet a man, quits the incomplete banquet. James, then a hobbadehoy, was now become a young man, having had the benefits of a university education, and acquired the inestimable polish which is gained by living in a fast set at a small college, and contracting debts, and being rusticated, and being plucked.

He was a handsome lad, however, when he came to present himself to his aunt at Brighton, and good looks were always a title to the fickle old lady's favour. Nor did his blushes and awkwardness take away from it: she was pleased with these healthy tokens of the young gentleman's ingenuousness.

He said "he had come down for a couple of days to see a man of his college, and—and to pay my respects

to you, Ma'am, and my father's and mother's, who hope you are well."

Pitt was in the room with Miss Crawley when the lad was announced, and looked very blank when his name was mentioned. The old lady had plenty of humour, and enjoyed her correct nephew's perplexity. She asked after all the people at the Rectory with great interest; and said she was thinking of paying them a visit. She praised the lad to his face, and said he was well-grown and very much improved, and that it was a pity his sisters had not some of his good looks; and finding, on inquiry, that he had taken up his quarters at an hotel, would not hear of his stopping there, but bade Mr. Bowls send for Mr. James Crawley's things instantly; "and hark ye, Bowls," she added, with great graciousness, "you will have the goodness to pay Mr. James's bill."

She flung Pitt a look of arch triumph, which caused that diplomatist almost to choke with envy. Much as he had ingratiated himself with his aunt, she had never yet invited him to stay under her roof, and here was a young whipper-snapper, who at first sight was made welcome there.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," says Bowls, advancing with a profound bow; "what 'otel, Sir, shall Thomas fetch the luggage from?"

"O, dam," said young James, starting up, as if in some alarm, "I'll go."

"What!" said Miss Crawley.

"The Tom Cribb's Arms," said James, blushing deeply.

Miss Crawley burst out laughing at this title. Mr. Bowls gave one abrupt guffaw, as a confidential servant

of the family, but choked the rest of the volley; the diplomatist only smiled.

"I—I didn't know any better," said James, looking down. "I've never been here before; it was the coachman told me." The young story-teller! The fact is, that on the Southampton coach, the day previous, James Crawley had met the Tutbury Pet, who was coming to Brighton to make a match with the Rottingdean Fibber; and enchanted by the Pet's conversation, had passed the evening in company with that scientific man and his friends, at the inn in question.

"I—I'd best go and settle the score," James continued. "Couldn't think of asking you, Ma'am," he added, generously.

This delicacy made his aunt laugh the more.

"Go and settle the bill, Bowls," she said, with a wave of her hand, "and bring it to me."

Poor lady, she did not know what she had done! "There—there's a little *dawg*," said James, looking frightfully guilty. "I'd best go for him. He bites footmen's calves."

All the party cried out with laughing at this description; even Briggs and Lady Jane, who was sitting mute during the interview between Miss Crawley and her nephew: and Bowls, without a word, quitted the room.

Still, by way of punishing her elder nephew, Miss Crawley persisted in being gracious to the young Oxonian. There were no limits to her kindness or her compliments when they once began. She told Pitt he might come to dinner, and insisted that James should accompany her in her drive, and paraded him solemnly up and down the cliff, on the back seat of the barouche. During all this excursion, she condescended to say civil

things to him: she quoted Italian and French poetry to the poor bewildered lad, and persisted that he was a fine scholar, and was perfectly sure he would gain a gold medal, and be a Senior Wrangler.

"Haw, haw," laughed James, encouraged by these compliments; "Senior Wrangler, indeed; that's at the other shop."

"What is the other shop, my dear child?" said the lady.

"Senior Wranglers at Cambridge, not Oxford," said the scholar, with a knowing air; and would probably have been more confidential, but that suddenly there appeared on the cliff in a tax-cart, drawn by a bang-up pony, dressed in white flannel coats, with mother-of-pearl buttons, his friends the Tutbury Pet and the Rottingdean Fibber, with three other gentlemen of their acquaintance, who all saluted poor James there in the carriage as he sate. This incident damped the ingenuous youth's spirits, and no word of yea or nay could he be induced to utter during the rest of the drive.

On his return he found his room prepared, and his portmanteau ready, and might have remarked that Mr. Bowls's countenance, when the latter conducted him to his apartments, wore a look of gravity, wonder, and compassion. But the thought of Mr. Bowls did not enter his head. He was deploring the dreadful predicament in which he found himself, in a house full of old women, jabbering French and Italian, and talking poetry to him. "Reg'larly up a tree, by jingo!" exclaimed the modest boy, who could not face the gentlest of her sex—not even Briggs—when she began to talk to him; whereas, put him at Iffley Lock, and he could out-slang the boldest bargeman.

At dinner, James appeared choking in a white neck-cloth, and had the honour of handing my Lady Jane down stairs, while Briggs and Mr. Crawley followed afterwards, conducting the old lady, with her apparatus of bundles, and shawls, and cushions. Half of Briggs's time at dinner was spent in superintending the invalid's comfort, and in cutting up chicken for her fat spaniel. James did not talk much, but he made a point of asking all the ladies to drink wine, and accepted Mr. Crawley's challenge, and consumed the greater part of a bottle of champagne which Mr. Bowls was ordered to produce in his honour. The ladies having withdrawn, and the two cousins being left together, Pitt, the ex-diplomatist, became very communicative and friendly. He asked after James's career at college—what his prospects in life were—hoped heartily he would get on; and, in a word, was frank and amiable. James's tongue unloosed with the port, and he told his cousin his life, his prospects, his debts, his troubles at the little-go, and his rows with the proctors, filling rapidly from the bottles before him, and flying from Port to Madeira with joyous activity.

"The chief pleasure which my aunt has," said Mr. Crawley, filling his glass, "is that people should do as they like in her house. This is Liberty Hall, James, and you can't do Miss Crawley a greater kindness than to do as you please, and ask for what you will. I know you have all sneered at me in the country for being a Tory. Miss Crawley is liberal enough to suit any fancy. She is a Republican in principle, and despises everything like rank or title."

"Why are you going to marry an Earl's daughter?" said James.

"My dear friend, remember it is not poor Lady Jane's fault that she is well born," Pitt replied, with a courtly air. "She cannot help being a lady. Besides, I am a Tory, you know."

"Oh, as for that," said Jim, "there's nothing like old blood; no, dammy, nothing like it. I'm none of your radicals. I know what it is to be a gentleman, dammy. See the chaps in a boat-race; look at the fellers in a fight; aye, look at a dawg killing rats,—which is it wins? the good-blooded ones. Get some more port, Bowls, old boy, whilst I buzz this bottle here. What was I a saying?"

"I think you were speaking of dogs killing rats," Pitt remarked mildly, handing his cousin the decanter to "buzz."

"Killing rats was I? Well, Pitt, are you a sporting man? Do you want to see a dawg as *can* kill a rat? If you do, come down with me to Tom Corduroy's, in Castle Street Mews, and I'll show you such a bull-terrier as— Pooh! gammon," cried James, bursting out laughing at his own absurdity,—"*you* don't care about a dawg or rat; it's all nonsense. I'm blest if I think you know the difference between a dog and a duck."

"No; by the way," Pitt continued with increased blandness, "it was about blood you were talking, and the personal advantages which people derive from patrician birth. Here's the fresh bottle."

"Blood's the word," said James, gulping the ruby fluid down. "Nothing like blood, sir, in hosses, dawgs, *and* men. Why, only last term, just before I was rusticated, that is, I mean just before I had the measles, ha, ha,—there was me and Ringwood of Christchurch, Bob Ringwood, Lord Cinqbars' son, having our beer at

the Bell at Blenheim, when the Banbury bargeman offered to fight either of us for a bowl of punch. I couldn't. My arm was in a sling; couldn't even take the drag down,—a brute of a mare of mine had fell with me only two days before, out with the Abingdon, and I thought my arm was broke. Well, sir, I couldn't finish him, but Bob had his coat off at once—he stood up to the Banbury man for three minutes, and polished him off in four rounds easy. Gad, how he did drop, sir, and what was it? Blood, sir, all blood."

"You don't drink, James," the ex-attaché continued. "In my time at Oxford, the men passed round the bottle a little quicker than you young fellows seem to do."

"Come, come," said James, putting his hand to his nose and winking at his cousin with a pair of vinous eyes, "no jokes, old boy; no trying it on on me. You want to trot me out, but it's no go. In vino veritas, old boy. Mars, Bacchus, Apollo virorum, hey? I wish my aunt would send down some of this to the governor; it's a precious good tap."

"You had better ask her," Machiavel continued, "or make the best of your time now. What says the bard? 'Nunc vino pellite curas Cras ingens iterabimus æquor,'" and the Bacchanalian, quoting the above with a House of Commons air, tossed off nearly a thimbleful of wine with an immense flourish of his glass.

At the Rectory, when the bottle of port wine was opened after dinner, the young ladies had each a glass from a bottle of currant wine. Mrs. Bute took one glass of port, honest James had a couple commonly, but as his father grew very sulky if he made further inroads on the bottle, the good lad generally refrained from trying for more, and subsided either into the currant wine,

or to some private gin-and-water in the stables, which he enjoyed in the company of the coachman and his pipe. At Oxford, the quantity of wine was unlimited, but the quality was inferior: but when quantity and quality united, as at his aunt's house, James showed that he could appreciate them indeed; and hardly needed any of his cousin's encouragement in draining off the second bottle supplied by Mr. Bowls.

When the time for coffee came, however, and for a return to the ladies, of whom he stood in awe, the young gentleman's agreeable frankness left him, and he relapsed into his usual surly timidity; contenting himself by saying yes and no, by scowling at Lady Jane, and by upsetting one cup of coffee during the evening.

If he did not speak he yawned in a pitiable manner, and his presence threw a damp upon the modest proceedings of the evening, for Miss Crawley and Lady Jane at their piquet, and Miss Briggs at her work, felt that his eyes were wildly fixed on them, and were uneasy under that maudlin look.

"He seems a very silent, awkward, bashful lad," said Miss Crawley to Mr. Pitt.

"He is more communicative in men's society than with ladies," Machiavel dryly replied: perhaps rather disappointed that the port wine had not made Jim speak more.

He had spent the early part of the next morning in writing home to his mother a most flourishing account of his reception by Miss Crawley. But ah! he little knew what evils the day was bringing for him, and how short his reign of favour was destined to be. A circumstance which Jim had forgotten—a trivial but fatal circumstance—had taken place at the Cribb's Arms on

the night before he had come to his aunt's house. It was no other than this—Jim, who was always of a generous disposition, and when in his cups especially hospitable, had in the course of the night treated the Tutbury champion and the Rottingdean man, and their friends, twice or thrice to the refreshment of gin-and-water—so that no less than eighteen glasses of that fluid at eightpence per glass were charged in Mr. James Crawley's bill. It was not the amount of eightpences, but the quantity of gin which told fatally against poor James's character, when his aunt's butler, Mr. Bowls, went down at his mistress's request to pay the young gentleman's bill. The landlord, fearing lest the account should be refused altogether, swore solemnly that the young gent had consumed personally every farthing's worth of the liquor: and Bowls paid the bill finally, and showed it on his return home to Mrs. Firkin, who was shocked at the frightful prodigality of gin; and took the bill to Miss Briggs as accountant-general; who thought it her duty to mention the circumstance to her principal, Miss Crawley.

Had he drunk a dozen bottles of claret, the old spinster could have pardoned him. Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan drank claret. Gentlemen drank claret. But eighteen glasses of gin consumed among boxers in an ignoble pot-house—it was an odious crime and not to be pardoned readily. Everything went against the lad: he came home perfumed from the stables, whither he had been to pay his dog Towzer a visit—and whence he was going to take his friend out for an airing, when he met Miss Crawley and her wheezy Blenheim spaniel, which Towzer would have eaten up had not the Blenheim fled squealing to the protection of Miss Briggs,

while the atrocious master of the bull-dog stood laughing at the horrible persecution.

This day too the unlucky boy's modesty had likewise forsaken him. He was lively and facetious at dinner. During the repast he levelled one or two jokes against Pitt Crawley: he drank as much wine as upon the previous day; and going quite unsuspiciously to the drawing-room, began to entertain the ladies there with some choice Oxford stories. He described the different pugilistic qualities of Molyneux and Dutch Sam, offered playfully to give Lady Jane the odds upon the Tutbury Pet against the Rottingdean man, or take them, as her Ladyship chose: and crowned the pleasantry by proposing to back himself against his cousin Pitt Crawley, either with or without the gloves. "And that's a fair offer, my buck," he said, with a loud laugh, slapping Pitt on the shoulder, "and my father told me to make it, too, and he'll go halves in the bet, ha, ha!" So saying, the engaging youth nodded knowingly at poor Miss Briggs, and pointed his thumb over his shoulder at Pitt Crawley in a jocular and exulting manner.

Pitt was not pleased altogether perhaps, but still not unhappy in the main. Poor Jim had his laugh out: and staggered across the room with his aunt's candle, when the old lady moved to retire, and offered to salute her with the blandest tipsy smile; and he took his own leave and went up stairs to his bed-room perfectly satisfied with himself, and with a pleased notion that his aunt's money would be left to him in preference to his father and all the rest of the family.

Once up in the bed-room, one would have thought he could not make matters worse; and yet this unlucky boy did. The moon was shining very pleasantly out

on the sea, and Jim, attracted to the window by the romantic appearance of the ocean and the heavens, thought he would further enjoy them while smoking. Nobody would smell the tobacco, he thought, if he cunningly opened the window and kept his head and pipe in the fresh air. This he did: but being in an excited state, poor Jim had forgotten that his door was open all this time, so that the breeze blowing inwards and a fine thorough draft being established, the clouds of tobacco were carried down-stairs, and arrived with quite undiminished fragrance to Miss Crawley and Miss Briggs.

The pipe of tobacco finished the business: and the Bute-Crawleys never knew how many thousand pounds it cost them. Firkin rushed down stairs to Bowls who was reading out the "Fire and the Frying Pan" to his aide-de-camp in a loud and ghostly voice. The dreadful secret was told to him by Firkin with so frightened a look, that for the first moment Mr. Bowls and his young man thought that robbers were in the house; the legs of whom had probably been discovered by the woman under Miss Crawley's bed. When made aware of the fact, however—to rush up stairs at three steps at a time—to enter the unconscious James's apartment, calling out, "Mr. James," in a voice stifled with alarm, and to cry, "For Gawd's sake, sir, stop that 'ere pipe," was the work of a minute with Mr. Bowls. "O, Mr. James, what *'ave* you done!" he said in a voice of the deepest pathos, as he threw the implement out of the window. "What 'ave you done, sir! Missis can't abide 'em."

"Missis needn't smoke," said James with a frantic misplaced laugh, and thought the whole matter an excellent joke. But his feelings were very different in

Mr. James's pipe put out

the morning, when Mr. Bowls's young man, who operated upon Mr. James's boots, and brought him his hot water to shave that beard which he was so anxiously expecting, handed a note in to Mr. James in bed, in the handwriting of Miss Briggs.

"Dear sir," it said, "Miss Crawley has passed an exceedingly disturbed night, owing to the shocking manner in which the house has been polluted by tobacco; Miss Crawley bids me say she regrets that she is too unwell to see you before you go—and above all that she ever induced you to remove from the ale-house,

where she is sure you will be much more comfortable during the rest of your stay at Brighton."

And herewith honest James's career as a candidate for his aunt's favour ended. He *had* in fact, and without knowing it, done what he menaced to do. He had fought his cousin Pitt with the gloves.

Where meanwhile was he who had been once first favourite for this race for money? Becky and Rawdon, as we have seen, were come together after Waterloo, and were passing the winter of 1815 at Paris in great splendour and gaiety. Rebecca was a good economist, and the price poor Jos Sedley had paid for her two horses was in itself sufficient to keep their little establishment afloat for a year, at the least; there was no occasion to turn into money "my pistols, the same which I shot Captain Marker," or the gold dressing-case, or the cloak lined with sable. Becky had it made into a pelisse for herself, in which she rode in the Bois de Boulogne to the admiration of all: and you should have seen the scene between her and her delighted husband, whom she rejoined after the army had entered Cambray, and when she unsewed herself, and let out of her dress all those watches, knick-knacks, bank-notes, cheques, and valuables, which she had secreted in the wadding, previous to her meditated flight from Brussels! Tufto was charmed, and Rawdon roared with delightful laughter, and swore that she was better than any play he ever saw, by Jove. And the way in which she jockeyed Jos, and which she described with infinite fun, carried up his delight to a pitch of quite insane enthusiasm. He believed in his wife as much as the French soldiers in Napoleon.

Her success in Paris was remarkable. All the French

ladies voted her charming. She spoke their language admirably. She adopted at once their grace, their liveliness, their manner. Her husband was stupid certainly —all English are stupid—and, besides, a dull husband at Paris is always a point in a lady's favour. He was the heir of the rich and *spirituelle* Miss Crawley, whose house had been open to so many of the French noblesse during the emigration. They received the Colonel's wife in their own hotels—"Why," wrote a great lady to Miss Crawley, who had bought her lace and trinkets at the Duchess's own price, and given her many a dinner during the pinching times after the Revolution—"Why does not our dear Miss come to her nephew and niece, and her attached friends in Paris? All the world *raffoles* of the charming Mistress and her *espiègle* beauty. Yes, we see in her the grace, the charm, the wit of our dear friend Miss Crawley! The King took notice of her yesterday at the Tuileries, and we are all jealous of the attention which Monsieur pays her. If you could have seen the spite of a certain stupid Miladi Bareacres, (whose eagle-beak and toque and feathers may be seen peering over the heads of all assemblies,) when Madame, the Duchess of Angoulême, the august daughter and companion of kings, desired especially to be presented to Mrs. Crawley, as your dear daughter and *protégée,* and thanked her in the name of France, for all your benevolence towards our unfortunates during their exile! She is of all the societies, of all the balls —of the balls—yes—of the dances, no; and yet how interesting and pretty this fair creature looks surrounded by the homage of the men, and so soon to be a mother! To hear her speak of you, her protectress, her mother, would bring tears to the eyes of ogres.

How she loves you! how we all love our admirable, our respectable Miss Crawley!"

It is to be feared that this letter of the Parisian great lady did not by any means advance Mrs. Becky's interest with her admirable, her respectable, relative. On the contrary, the fury of the old spinster was beyond bounds, when she found what was Rebecca's situation, and how audaciously she had made use of Miss Crawley's name, to get an *entrée* into Parisian society. Too much shaken in mind and body to compose a letter in the French language in reply to that of her correspondent, she dictated to Briggs a furious answer in her own native tongue, repudiating Mrs. Rawdon Crawley altogether, and warning the public to beware of her as a most artful and dangerous person. But as Madame the Duchess of X— had only been twenty years in England, she did not understand a single word of the language, and contented herself by informing Mrs. Rawdon Crawley at their next meeting, that she had received a charming letter from that *chère Mees,* and that it was full of benevolent things for Mrs. Crawley, who began seriously to have hopes that the spinster would relent.

Meanwhile, she was the gayest and most admired of Englishwomen: and had a little European congress on her reception-night. Prussians and Cossacks, Spanish and English—all the world was at Paris during this famous winter: to have seen the stars and cordons in Rebecca's humble saloon would have made all Baker Street pale with envy. Famous warriors rode by her carriage in the Bois, or crowded her modest little box at the Opera. Rawdon was in the highest spirits. There were no duns in Paris as yet: there were parties

every day at Véry's or Beauvilliers'; play was plentiful and his luck good. Tufto perhaps was sulky. Mrs. Tufto had come over to Paris at her own invitation, and besides this *contretemps,* there were a score of generals now round Becky's chair, and she might take her choice of a dozen bouquets when she went to the play. Lady Bareacres and the chiefs of the English society, stupid and irreproachable females, writhed with anguish at the success of the little upstart Becky, whose poisoned jokes quivered and rankled in their chaste breasts. But she had all the men on her side. She fought the women with indomitable courage, and they could not talk scandal in any tongue but their own.

So in *fêtes,* pleasures, and prosperity, the winter of 1815–1816 passed away with Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, who accommodated herself to polite life as if her ancestors had been people of fashion for centuries past—and who from her wit, talent, and energy, indeed merited a place of honour in Vanity Fair. In the early spring of 1816, *Galignani's Journal* contained the following announcement in an interesting corner of the paper: "On the 26th of March—the Lady of Lieutenant-Colonel Crawley, of the Life Guards Green—of a son and heir."

This event was copied into the London papers, out of which Miss Briggs read the statement to Miss Crawley, at breakfast, at Brighton. The intelligence, expected as it might have been, caused a crisis in the affairs of the Crawley family. The spinster's rage rose to its height, and sending instantly for Pitt, her nephew, and for the Lady Southdown, from Brunswick Square, she requested an immediate celebration of the marriage which had been so long pending between the two families. And she announced that it was her intention to

allow the young couple a thousand a year during her lifetime, at the expiration of which the bulk of her property would be settled upon her nephew and her dear niece, Lady Jane Crawley. Waxy came down to ratify the deeds—Lord Southdown gave away his sister—she was married by a Bishop, and not by the Rev. Bartholomew Irons—to the disappointment of the irregular prelate.

When they were married, Pitt would have liked to take a hymeneal tour with his bride, as became people of their condition. But the affection of the old lady towards Lady Jane had grown so strong, that she fairly owned she could not part with her favourite. Pitt and his wife came therefore and lived with Miss Crawley: and (greatly to the annoyance of poor Pitt, who conceived himself a most injured character—being subject to the humours of his aunt on one side, and of his mother-in-law on the other) Lady Southdown, from her neighbouring house, reigned over the whole family—Pitt, Lady Jane, Miss Crawley, Briggs, Bowls, Firkin, and all. She pitilessly dosed them with her tracts and her medicine, she dismissed Creamer, she installed Rodgers, and soon stripped Miss Crawley of even the semblance of authority. The poor soul grew so timid that she actually left off bullying Briggs any more, and clung to her niece, more fond and terrified every day. Peace to thee, kind and selfish, vain and generous old heathen!—We shall see thee no more. Let us hope that Lady Jane supported her kindly, and led her with gentle hand out of the busy struggle of Vanity Fair.

CHAPTER XXXV

WIDOW AND MOTHER

THE news of the great fights of Quatre Bras and Waterloo reached England at the same time. The *Gazette* first published the result of the two battles; at which glorious intelligence all England thrilled with triumph and fear. Particulars then followed; and after the announcement of the victories came the list of the wounded and the slain. Who can tell the dread with which that catalogue was opened and read! Fancy, at every village and homestead almost through the three kingdoms, the great news coming of the battles in Flanders, and the feelings of exultation and gratitude, bereavement and sickening dismay, when the lists of the regimental losses were gone through, and it became known whether the dear friend and relative had escaped or fallen. Anybody who will take the trouble of looking back to a file of the newspapers of the time, must, even now, feel at second-hand this breathless pause of expectation. The lists of casualties are carried on from day to day: you stop in the midst as in a story which is to be continued in our next. Think what the

feelings must have been as those papers followed each other fresh from the press; and if such an interest could be felt in our country, and about a battle where but twenty thousand of our people were engaged, think of the condition of Europe for twenty years before, where people were fighting, not by thousands, but by millions; each one of whom as he struck his enemy wounded horribly some other innocent heart far away.

The news which that famous *Gazette* brought to the Osbornes gave a dreadful shock to the family and its chief. The girls indulged unrestrained in their grief. The gloom-stricken old father was still more borne down by his fate and sorrow. He strove to think that a judgment was on the boy for his disobedience. He dared not own that the severity of the sentence frightened him, and that its fulfilment had come too soon upon his curses. Sometimes a shuddering terror struck him, as if he had been the author of the doom which he had called down on his son. There was a chance before of reconciliation. The boy's wife might have died; or he might have come back and said, Father, I have sinned. But there was no hope now. He stood on the other side of the gulf impassable, haunting his parent with sad eyes. He remembered them once before so in a fever, when every one thought the lad was dying, and he lay on his bed speechless, and gazing with a dreadful gloom. Good God! how the father clung to the doctor then; and with what a sickening anxiety he followed him: what a weight of grief was off his mind when, after the crisis of the fever, the lad recovered, and looked at his father once more with eyes that recognised him. But now there was no help or cure, or chance of reconcilement: above all, there were no humble words to soothe

vanity outraged and furious, or bring to its natural flow the poisoned, angry blood. And it is hard to say which pang it was that tore the proud father's heart most keenly—that his son should have gone out of the reach of his forgiveness, or that the apology which his own pride expected should have escaped him.

Whatever his sensations might have been, however, the stern old man would have no confidant. He never mentioned his son's name to his daughters; but ordered the elder to place all the females of the establishment in mourning; and desired that the male servants should be similarly attired in deep black. All parties and entertainments, of course, were to be put off. No communications were made to his future son-in-law, whose marriage-day had been fixed: but there was enough in Mr. Osborne's appearance to prevent Mr. Bullock from making any inquiries, or in any way pressing forward that ceremony. He and the ladies whispered about it under their voices in the drawing-room sometimes, whither the father never came. He remained constantly in his own study; the whole front part of the house being closed until some time after the completion of the general mourning.

About three weeks after the 18th of June, Mr. Osborne's acquaintance, Sir William Dobbin, called at Mr. Osborne's house in Russell Square, with a very pale and agitated face, and insisted upon seeing that gentleman. Ushered into his room, and after a few words, which neither the speaker nor the host understood, the former produced from an inclosure a letter sealed with a large red seal. "My son, Major Dobbin," the Alderman said, with some hesitation, "dispatched me a letter by an officer of the —th, who arrived in town to-day.

My son's letter contains one for you, Osborne." The Alderman placed the letter on the table, and Osborne stared at him for a moment or two in silence. His looks frightened the ambassador, who after looking guiltily for a little time at the grief-stricken man, hurried away without another word.

The letter was in George's well-known bold handwriting. It was that one which he had written before day-break on the 16th of June, and just before he took leave of Amelia. The great red seal was emblazoned with the sham coat of arms which Osborne had assumed from the Peerage, with "Pax in bello" for a motto; that of the ducal house with which the vain old man tried to fancy himself connected. The hand that signed it would never hold pen or sword more. The very seal that sealed it had been robbed from George's dead body as it lay on the field of battle. The father knew nothing of this, but sat and looked at the letter in terrified vacancy. He almost fell when he went to open it.

Have you ever had a difference with a dear friend? How his letters, written in the period of love and confidence, sicken and rebuke you! What a dreary mourning it is to dwell upon those vehement protests of dead affection! What lying epitaphs they make over the corpse of love! What dark, cruel comments upon Life and Vanities! Most of us have got or written drawers full of them. They are closet-skeletons which we keep and shun. Osborne trembled long before the letter from his dead son.

The poor boy's letter did not say much. He had been too proud to acknowledge the tenderness which his heart felt. He only said, that on the eve of a great battle, he wished to bid his father farewell, and solemnly to

implore his good offices for the wife—it might be for the child—whom he left behind him. He owned with contrition that his irregularities and his extravagance had already wasted a large part of his mother's little fortune. He thanked his father for his former generous conduct; and he promised him, that if he fell on the field or survived it, he would act in a manner worthy of the name of George Osborne.

His English habit, pride, awkwardness perhaps, had prevented him from saying more. His father could not see the kiss George had placed on the superscription of his letter. Mr. Osborne dropped it with the bitterest, deadliest pang of balked affection and revenge. His son was still beloved and unforgiven.

About two months afterwards, however, as the young ladies of the family went to church with their father, they remarked how he took a different seat from that which he usually occupied when he chose to attend divine worship; and that from his cushion opposite, he looked up at the wall over their heads. This caused the young women likewise to gaze in the direction towards which their father's gloomy eyes pointed: and they saw an elaborate monument upon the wall, where Britannia was represented weeping over an urn, and a broken sword and a couchant lion indicated that the piece of sculpture had been erected in honour of a deceased warrior. The sculptors of those days had stocks of such funereal emblems in hand; as you may see still on the walls of St. Paul's, which are covered with hundreds of these braggart heathen allegories. There was a constant demand for them during the first fifteen years of the present century.

Under the memorial in question were emblazoned the

well-known and pompous Osborne arms; and the inscription said, that the monument was "Sacred to the memory of George Osborne, Junior, Esq., late a Captain in his Majesty's —th regiment of foot, who fell on the 18th of June, 1815, aged 28 years, while fighting for his king and country in the glorious victory of Waterloo. *Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori.*"

The sight of that stone agitated the nerves of the sisters so much, that Miss Maria was compelled to leave the church. The congregation made way respectfully for those sobbing girls clothed in deep black, and pitied the stern old father seated opposite the memorial of the dead soldier. "Will he forgive Mrs. George?" the girls said to themselves as soon as their ebullition of grief was over. Much conversation passed too among the acquaintances of the Osborne family, who knew of the rupture between the son and father caused by the former's marriage, as to the chance of a reconciliation with the young widow. There were bets among the gentlemen both about Russell Square and in the City.

If the sisters had any anxiety regarding the possible recognition of Amelia as a daughter of the family, it was increased presently, and towards the end of the autumn, by their father's announcement that he was going abroad. He did not say whither, but they knew at once that his steps would be turned towards Belgium, and were aware that George's widow was still in Brussels. They had pretty accurate news indeed of poor Amelia from Lady Dobbin and her daughters. Our honest Captain had been promoted in consequence of the death of the second Major of the regiment on the field; and the brave O'Dowd, who had distinguished himself greatly here as upon all occasions where he had

a chance to show his coolness and valour, was a Colonel and Companion of the Bath.

Very many of the brave —th, who had suffered severely upon both days of action, were still at Brussels in the autumn, recovering of their wounds. The city was a vast military hospital for months after the great battles; and as men and officers began to rally from their hurts, the gardens and places of public resort swarmed with maimed warriors, old and young, who, just rescued out of death, fell to gambling, and gaiety, and love-making, as people of Vanity Fair will do. Mr. Osborne found out some of the —th easily. He knew their uniform quite well, and had been used to follow all the promotions and exchanges in the regiment, and loved to talk about it and its officers as if he had been one of the number. On the day after his arrival at Brussels, and as he issued from his hotel, which faced the park, he saw a soldier in the well-known facings, reposing on a stone bench in the garden, and went and sate down trembling by the wounded convalescent man.

"Were you in Captain Osborne's company?" he said, and added, after a pause, "he was my son, sir."

The man was not of the Captain's company, but he lifted up his unwounded arm and touched his cap sadly and respectfully to the haggard broken-spirited gentleman who questioned him. "The whole army didn't contain a finer or a better officer," the soldier said. "The Sergeant of the Captain's company (Captain Raymond had it now), was in town, though, and was just well of a shot in the shoulder. His honour might see him if he liked, who could tell him anything he wanted to know about—about the —th's actions. But his honour had seen Major Dobbin, no doubt, the brave Captain's great

friend; and Mrs. Osborne, who was here too, and had been very bad, he heard everybody say. They say she was out of her mind like for six weeks or more. But your honour knows all about that—and asking your pardon"—the man added.

Osborne put a guinea into the soldier's hand, and told him he should have another if he would bring the Sergeant to the Hôtel du Parc; a promise which very soon brought the desired officer to Mr. Osborne's presence. And the first soldier went away; and after telling a comrade or two how Captain Osborne's father was arrived, and what a free-handed generous gentleman he was, they went and made good cheer with drink and feasting, as long as the guineas lasted which had come from the proud purse of the mourning old father.

In the Sergeant's company, who was also just convalescent, Osborne made the journey of Waterloo and Quatre Bras, a journey which thousands of his countrymen were then taking. He took the Sergeant with him in his carriage, and went through both fields under his guidance. He saw the point of the road where the regiment marched into action on the 16th, and the slope down which they drove the French cavalry who were pressing on the retreating Belgians. There was the spot where the noble Captain cut down the French officer who was grappling with the young Ensign for the colours, the Colour-Sergeants having been shot down. Along this road they retreated on the next day, and here was the bank at which the regiment bivouacked under the rain of the night of the seventeenth. Further on was the position which they took and held during the day, forming time after time to receive the charge of the enemy's horsemen, and lying down under the shelter

of the bank from the furious French cannonade. And it was at this declivity when at evening the whole English line received the order to advance, as the enemy fell back after his last charge, that the Captain, hurraying and rushing down the hill waving his sword, received a shot and fell dead. "It was Major Dobbin who took back the Captain's body to Brussels," the Sergeant said, in a low voice, "and had him buried, as your honour knows." The peasants and relic-hunters about the place were screaming round the pair, as the soldier told his story, offering for sale all sorts of mementoes of the fight, crosses, and epaulets, and shattered cuirasses, and eagles.

Osborne gave a sumptuous reward to the Sergeant when he parted with him, after having visited the scenes of his son's last exploits. His burial-place he had already seen. Indeed, he had driven thither immediately after his arrival at Brussels. George's body lay in the pretty burial-ground of Laeken, near the city; in which place, having once visited it on a party of pleasure, he had lightly expressed a wish to have his grave made. And there the young officer was laid by his friend, in the unconsecrated corner of the garden, separated by a little hedge from the temples and towers and plantations of flowers and shrubs, under which the Roman Catholic dead repose. It seemed a humiliation to old Osborne to think that his son, an English gentleman, a captain in the famous British army, should not be found worthy to lie in ground where mere foreigners were buried. Which of us is there can tell how much vanity lurks in our warmest regard for others, and how selfish our love is? Old Osborne did not speculate much upon the mingled nature of his feelings, and how his

instinct and selfishness were combating together. He firmly believed that everything he did was right, that he ought on all occasions to have his own way—and like the sting of a wasp or serpent his hatred rushed out armed and poisonous against anything like opposition. He was proud of his hatred as of everything else. Always to be right, always to trample forward, and never to doubt, are not these the great qualities with which dullness takes the lead in the world?

As after the drive to Waterloo, Mr. Osborne's carriage was nearing the gates of the city at sunset, they met another open barouche, in which were a couple of ladies and a gentleman, and by the side of which an officer was riding. Osborne gave a start back, and the Sergeant, seated with him, cast a look of surprise at his neighbour, as he touched his cap to the officer, who mechanically returned his salute. It was Amelia, with the lame young Ensign by her side, and opposite to her her faithful friend Mrs. O'Dowd. It was Amelia, but how changed from the fresh and comely girl Osborne knew. Her face was white and thin. Her pretty brown hair was parted under a widow's cap—the poor child. Her eyes were fixed, and looking nowhere. They stared blank in the face of Osborne, as the carriages crossed each other, but she did not know him; nor did he recognise her, until looking up, he saw Dobbin riding by her: and then he knew who it was. He hated her. He did not know how much until he saw her there. When her carriage had passed on, he turned and stared at the Sergeant, with a curse and defiance in his eye cast at his companion, who could not help looking at him—as much as to say, "How dare *you* look at me? Damn you! I *do* hate her. It is she who has tumbled my hopes and

all my pride down." "Tell the scoundrel to drive on quick," he shouted with an oath, to the lackey on the box. A minute afterwards, a horse came clattering over the pavement behind Osborne's carriage, and Dobbin rode up. His thoughts had been elsewhere as the carriages passed each other, and it was not until he had ridden some paces forward, that he remembered it was Osborne who had just passed him. Then he turned to examine if the sight of her father-in-law had made any impression on Amelia, but the poor girl did not know who had passed. Then William, who daily used to accompany her in his drives, taking out his watch, made some excuse about an engagement which he suddenly recollected, and so rode off. She did not remark that either: but sate looking before her, over the homely landscape towards the woods in the distance, by which George marched away.

"Mr. Osborne, Mr. Osborne!" cried Dobbin, as he rode up and held out his hand. Osborne made no motion to take it, but shouted out once more and with another curse to his servant to drive on.

Dobbin laid his hand on the carriage side. "I will see you, sir," he said. "I have a message for you."

"From that woman?" said Osborne, fiercely.

"No," replied the other, "from your son;" at which Osborne fell back into the corner of his carriage, and Dobbin allowing it to pass on, rode close behind it, and so through the town until they reached Mr. Osborne's hotel, and without a word. There he followed Osborne up to his apartments. George had often been in the rooms; they were the lodgings which the Crawleys had occupied during their stay in Brussels.

"Pray, have you any commands for me, Captain

Dobbin, or, I beg your pardon, I should say *Major* Dobbin, since better men than you are dead, and you step into their *shoes*," said Mr. Osborne, in that sarcastic tone which he sometimes was pleased to assume.

"Better men *are* dead," Dobbin replied. "I want to speak to you about one."

"Make it short, sir," said the other with an oath, scowling at his visitor.

"I am here as his closest friend," the Major resumed, "and the executor of his will. He made it before he went into action. Are you aware how small his means are, and of the straitened circumstances of his widow?"

"I don't know his widow, sir," Osborne said. "Let her go back to her father." But the gentleman whom he addressed was determined to remain in good temper, and went on without heeding the interruption.

"Do you know, sir, Mrs. Osborne's condition? Her life and her reason almost have been shaken by the blow which has fallen on her. It is very doubtful whether she will rally. There is a chance left for her, however, and it is about this I came to speak to you. She will be a mother soon. Will you visit the parent's offence upon the child's head? or will you forgive the child for poor George's sake?"

Osborne broke out into a rhapsody of self-praise and imprecations;—by the first, excusing himself to his own conscience for his conduct; by the second, exaggerating the undutifulness of George. No father in all England could have behaved more generously to a son, who had rebelled against him wickedly. He had died without even so much as confessing he was wrong. Let him take the consequences of his undutifulness and folly. As for himself, Mr. Osborne, he was a man of his word.

He had sworn never to speak to that woman, or to recognise her as his son's wife. "And that's what you may tell her," he concluded with an oath; "and that's what I will stick to to the last day of my life."

There was no hope from that quarter then. The widow must live on her slender pittance, or on such aid as Jos could give her. "I might tell her, and she would not heed it," thought Dobbin, sadly: for the poor girl's thoughts were not here at all since her catastrophe, and, stupefied under the pressure of her sorrow, good and evil were alike indifferent to her.

So, indeed, were even friendship and kindness. She received them both uncomplainingly, and having accepted them, relapsed into her grief.

Suppose some twelve months after the above conversation took place to have passed in the life of our poor Amelia. She has spent the first portion of that time in a sorrow so profound and pitiable, that we who have been watching and describing some of the emotions of that weak and tender heart, must draw back in the presence of the cruel grief under which it is bleeding. Tread silently round the hapless couch of the poor prostrate soul. Shut gently the door of the dark chamber wherein she suffers, as those kind people did who nursed her through the first months of her pain, and never left her until heaven had sent her consolation. A day came—of almost terrified delight and wonder—when the poor widowed girl pressed a child upon her breast—a child, with the eyes of George who was gone—a little boy, as beautiful as a cherub. What a miracle it was to hear its first cry! How she laughed and wept over it—how love, and hope, and prayer woke again in her bosom

as the baby nestled there. She was safe. The doctors who attended her, and had feared for her life or for her brain, had waited anxiously for this crisis before they could pronounce that either was secure. It was worth the long months of doubt and dread which the persons who had constantly been with her had passed, to see her eyes once more beaming tenderly upon them.

Our friend Dobbin was one of them. It was he who brought her back to England and to her mother's house; when Mrs. O'Dowd, receiving a peremptory summons from her Colonel, had been forced to quit her patient. To see Dobbin holding the infant, and to hear Amelia's laugh of triumph as she watched him, would have done any man good who had a sense of humour. William was the godfather of the child, and exerted his ingenuity in the purchase of cups, spoons, pap-boats, and corals for this little Christian.

How his mother nursed him, and dressed him, and lived upon him; how she drove away all nurses, and would scarce allow any hand but her own to touch him; how she considered that the greatest favour she could confer upon his godfather, Major Dobbin, was to allow the Major occasionally to dandle him, need not be told here. This child was her being. Her existence was a maternal caress. She enveloped the feeble and unconscious creature with love and worship. It was her life which the baby drank in from her bosom. Of nights, and when alone, she had stealthy and intense raptures of motherly love, such as God's marvellous care has awarded to the female instinct—joys how far higher and lower than reason—blind beautiful devotions which only women's hearts know. It was William Dobbin's

Major Sugarplums

task to muse upon these movements of Amelia's, and to watch her heart; and if his love made him divine almost all the feelings which agitated it, alas! he could see with a fatal perspicuity that there was no place there for him. And so, gently, he bore his fate, knowing it, and content to bear it.

I suppose Amelia's father and mother saw through the intentions of the Major, and were not ill-disposed to encourage him; for Dobbin visited their house daily, and stayed for hours with them, or with Amelia, or with the honest landlord, Mr. Clapp, and his family. He brought, on one pretext or another, presents to everybody, and almost every day; and went, with the landlord's little girl, who was rather a favourite with Amelia, by the name of Major Sugarplums. It was this little child who commonly acted as mistress of the ceremonies to introduce him to Mrs. Osborne. She laughed one day when Major Sugarplums' cab drove up to Fulham, and he descended from it, bringing out a wooden horse, a drum, a trumpet, and other warlike toys, for little Georgy, who was scarcely six months old, and for whom the articles in question were entirely premature.

The child was asleep. "Hush," said Amelia, annoyed, perhaps, at the creaking of the Major's boots; and she held out her hand; smiling because William could not take it until he had rid himself of his cargo of toys. "Go down stairs, little Mary," said he presently to the child, "I want to speak to Mrs. Osborne." She looked up rather astonished, and laid down the infant on its bed.

"I am come to say good-bye, Amelia," said he, taking her slender little white hand gently.

"Good-bye? and where are you going?" she said, with a smile.

"Send the letters to the agents," he said; "they will forward them; for you will write to me, won't you? I shall be away a long time."

"I'll write to you about Georgy," she said. "Dear William, how good you have been to him and to me. Look at him. Isn't he like an angel?"

The little pink hands of the child closed mechanically round the honest soldier's finger, and Amelia looked up in his face with bright maternal pleasure. The cruellest looks could not have wounded him more than that glance of hopeless kindness. He bent over the child and mother. He could not speak for a moment. And it was only with all his strength that he could force himself to say a God bless you. "God bless you," said Amelia, and held up her face and kissed him.

"Hush! Don't wake Georgy!" she added, as William Dobbin went to the door with heavy steps. She did not hear the noise of his cab-wheels as he drove away: she was looking at the child, who was laughing in his sleep.

CHAPTER XXXVI

HOW TO LIVE WELL ON NOTHING A-YEAR

I SUPPOSE there is no man in this Vanity Fair of ours so little observant as not to think sometimes about the worldly affairs of his acquaintances, or so extremely charitable as not to wonder how his neighbour Jones, or his neighbour Smith, can make both ends meet at the end of the year. With the utmost regard for the family, for instance (for I dine with them twice or thrice in the season), I cannot but own that the appearance of the Jenkinses in the Park, in the large barouche with the grenadier-footmen, will surprise and mystify me to my dying day: for though I know the equipage is only jobbed, and all the Jenkins people are on board-wages, yet those three men and the carriage must represent an expense of six hundred a-year at the very least—and then there are the splendid dinners, the two boys at Eton, the prize governess and masters for the girls, the trip abroad, or to Eastbourne or Worthing in the autumn, the annual ball with a supper from Gunter's (who, by the way, supplies most of the *first-rate* dinners which J. gives, as I know

very well, having been invited to one of them to fill a vacant place, when I saw at once that these repasts are very superior to the *common* run of entertainments for which the *humbler* sort of J.'s acquaintances get cards) —who, I say, with the most good-natured feelings in the world, can help wondering how the Jenkinses make out matters? What *is* Jenkins? We all know—Commissioner of the Tape and Sealing Wax Office, with £1200 a-year for a salary. Had his wife a private fortune? Pooh!—Miss Flint—one of eleven children of a small squire in Buckinghamshire. All she ever gets from her family is a turkey at Christmas, in exchange for which she has to board two or three of her sisters in the off season; and lodge and feed her brothers when they come to town. How does Jenkins balance his income? I say, as every friend of his must say, How is it that he has not been outlawed long since; and that he ever came back (as he did to the surprise of everybody) last year from Boulogne?

"I" is here introduced to personify the world in general—the Mrs. Grundy of each respected reader's private circle—every one of whom can point to some families of his acquaintance who live nobody knows how. Many a glass of wine have we all of us drunk, I have very little doubt, hob-and-nobbing with the hospitable giver, and wondering how the deuce he paid for it.

Some three or four years after his stay in Paris, when Rawdon Crawley and his wife were established in a very small comfortable house in Curzon Street, May Fair, there were scarcely one of the numerous friends whom they entertained at dinner, that did not ask the above question regarding them. The novelist, it has been said, before, knows everything, and as I am in a situation to

be able to tell the public how Crawley and his wife lived without any income, may I entreat the public newspapers which are in the habit of extracting portions of the various periodical works now published, *not* to reprint the following exact narrative and calculations—of which I ought, as the discoverer (and at some expense, too), to have the benefit. My son, I would say, were I blessed with a child—you may by deep inquiry and constant intercourse with him, learn how a man lives comfortably on nothing a-year. But it is best not to be intimate with gentlemen of this profession, and to take the calculations at second hand, as you do logarithms, for to work them yourself, depend upon it, will cost you something considerable.

On nothing per annum then, and during a course of some two or three years, of which we can afford to give but a very brief history, Crawley and his wife lived very happily and comfortably at Paris. It was in this period that he quitted the Guards, and sold out of the army. When we find him again, his moustachios and the title of Colonel on his card are the only relics of his military profession.

It has been mentioned that Rebecca, soon after her arrival in Paris, took a very smart and leading position in the society of that capital, and was welcomed at some of the most distinguished houses of the restored French nobility. The English men of fashion in Paris courted her, too, to the disgust of the ladies their wives, who could not bear the parvenue. For some months the salons of the Faubourg St. Germain, in which her place was secured, and the splendours of the new Court, where she was received with much distinction, delighted, and perhaps a little intoxicated Mrs. Crawley, who may have

been disposed during this period of elation to slight the people—honest young military men mostly—who formed her husband's chief society.

But the Colonel yawned sadly among the duchesses and great ladies of the Court. The old women who played *écarté* made such a noise about a five-franc piece, that it was not worth Colonel Crawley's while to sit down at a card-table. The wit of their conversation he could not appreciate, being ignorant of their language. And what good could his wife get, he urged, by making curtsies every night to a whole circle of Princesses? He left Rebecca presently to frequent these parties alone; resuming his own simple pursuits and amusements amongst the amiable friends of his own choice.

The truth is, when we say of a gentleman that he lives elegantly on nothing a-year, we use the word "nothing" to signify something unknown; meaning, simply, that we don't know how the gentleman in question defrays the expenses of his establishment. Now, our friend the Colonel had a great aptitude for all games of chance: and exercising himself, as he continually did, with the cards, the dice-box, or the cue, it is natural to suppose that he attained a much greater skill in the use of these articles than men can possess who only occasionally handle them. To use a cue at billiards well is like using a pencil, or a German flute, or a small-sword—you cannot master any one of these implements at first, and it is only by repeated study and perseverance, joined to a natural taste, that a man can excel in the handling of either. Now Crawley, from being only a brilliant amateur had grown to be a consummate master of billiards. Like a great general, his genius used to rise with the danger, and when the luck had been unfavourable to

him for a whole game, and the bets were consequently against him, he would, with consummate skill and boldness, make some prodigious hits which would restore the battle, and come in a victor at the end, to the astonishment of everybody—of everybody, that is, who was a stranger to his play. Those who were accustomed to see it were cautious how they staked their money against a man of such sudden resources, and brilliant and overpowering skill.

At games of cards he was equally skilful; for though he would constantly lose money at the commencement of an evening, playing so carelessly and making such blunders, that new comers were often inclined to think meanly of his talent; yet when roused to action, and awakened to caution by repeated small losses, it was remarked that Crawley's play became quite different, and

that he was pretty sure of beating his enemy thoroughly before the night was over. Indeed, very few men could say that they ever had the better of him.

His successes were so repeated that no wonder the envious and the vanquished spoke sometimes with bitterness regarding them. And as the French say of the Duke of Wellington, who never suffered a defeat, that only an astonishing series of lucky accidents enabled him to be an invariable winner; yet even they allow that he cheated at Waterloo, and was enabled to win the last great trick:—so it was hinted at head-quarters in England, that some foul play must have taken place in order to account for the continuous successes of Colonel Crawley.

Though Frascati's and the Salon were open at that time in Paris, the mania for play was so widely spread, that the public gambling-rooms did not suffice for the general ardour, and gambling went on in private houses as much as if there had been no public means for gratifying the passion. At Crawley's charming little *réunions* of an evening this fatal amusement commonly was practised—much to good-natured little Mrs. Crawley's annoyance. She spoke about her husband's passion for dice with the deepest grief; she bewailed it to everybody who came to her house. She besought the young fellows never, never to touch a box; and when young Green, of the Rifles, lost a very considerable sum of money, Rebecca passed a whole night in tears, as the servant told the unfortunate young gentleman, and actually went on her knees to her husband to beseech him to remit the debt, and burn the acknowledgment. How could he? He had lost just as much himself to Blackstone of the Hussars, and Count Punter of the Han-

overian Cavalry. Green might have any decent time; but pay?—of course he must pay; to talk of burning I O U's was child's-play.

Other officers, chiefly young—for the young fellows gathered round Mrs. Crawley—came from her parties with long faces, having dropped more or less money at her fatal card-tables. Her house began to have an unfortunate reputation. The old hands warned the less experienced of their danger. Colonel O'Dowd, of the —th regiment, one of those occupying in Paris, warned Lieutenant Spooney of that corps. A loud and violent fracas took place between the infantry-colonel and his lady, who were dining at the Café de Paris, and Colonel and Mrs. Crawley, who were also taking their meal there. The ladies engaged on both sides. Mrs. O'Dowd snapped her fingers in Mrs. Crawley's face, and called her husband "no betther than a black-leg." Colonel Crawley challenged Colonel O'Dowd, C.B. The Commander-in-Chief hearing of the dispute sent for Colonel Crawley, who was getting ready the same pistols "which he shot Captain Marker," and had such a conversation with him that no duel took place. If Rebecca had not gone on her knees to General Tufto, Crawley would have been sent back to England; and he did not play, except with civilians, for some weeks after.

But in spite of Rawdon's undoubted skill and constant successes, it became evident to Rebecca, considering these things, that their position was but a precarious one, and that, even although they paid scarcely anybody, their little capital would end one day by dwindling into zero. "Gambling," she would say, "dear, is good to help your income, but not as an income itself. Some day people may be tired of play, and then

where are we?" Rawdon acquiesced in the justice of her opinion; and in truth he had remarked that after a few nights of his little suppers, &c., gentlemen *were* tired of play with him, and, in spite of Rebecca's charms, did not present themselves very eagerly.

Easy and pleasant as their life at Paris was, it was after all only an idle dalliance and amiable trifling; and Rebecca saw that she must push Rawdon's fortune in their own country. She must get him a place or appointment at home or in the colonies; and she determined to make a move upon England as soon as the way could be cleared for her. As a first step she had made Crawley sell out of the Guards, and go on half-pay. His function as aide-de-camp to General Tufto had ceased previously. Rebecca laughed in all companies at that officer, at his toupee (which he mounted on coming to Paris), at his waistband, at his false teeth, at his pretensions to be a lady-killer above all, and his absurd vanity in fancying every woman whom he came near was in love with him. It was Mrs. Brent, the beetle-browed wife of Mr. Commissary Brent, to whom the General transferred his attentions now—his bouquets, his dinners at the restaurateurs, his opera-boxes, and his knick-knacks. Poor Mrs. Tufto was no more happy than before, and had still to pass long evenings alone with her daughters, knowing that her General was gone off scented and curled to stand behind Mrs. Brent's chair at the play. Becky had a dozen admirers in his place to be sure; and could cut her rival to pieces with her wit. But as we have said, she was growing tired of this idle social life: opera-boxes and restaurateur-dinners palled upon her: nosegays could not be laid by as a provision for future years: and she could not live upon knick-

knacks, laced handkerchiefs, and kid gloves. She felt the frivolity of pleasure, and longed for more substantial benefits.

At this juncture news arrived which was spread among the many creditors of the Colonel at Paris, and which caused them great satisfaction. Miss Crawley, the rich aunt from whom he expected his immense inheritance, was dying; the Colonel must haste to her bedside. Mrs. Crawley and her child would remain behind until he came to reclaim them. He departed for Calais, and having reached that place in safety, it might have been supposed that he went to Dover; but instead he took the diligence to Dunkirk, and thence travelled to Brussels, for which place he had a former predilection. The fact is, he owed more money at London than at Paris; and he preferred the quiet little Belgian city to either of the more noisy capitals.

Her aunt was dead. Mrs. Crawley ordered the most intense mourning for herself and little Rawdon. The Colonel was busy arranging the affairs of the inheritance. They could take the premier now, instead of the little entresol of the hotel which they occupied. Mrs. Crawley and the landlord had a consultation about the new hangings, an amicable wrangle about the carpets, and a final adjustment of everything except the bill. She went off in one of his carriages; her French *bonne* with her; the child by her side; the admirable landlord and landlady smiling farewell to her from the gate. General Tufto was furious when he heard she was gone, and Mrs. Brent furious with him for being furious; Lieutenant Spooney was cut to the heart; and the landlord got ready his best apartments previous to the return of the fascinating little woman and her husband. He

serréd the trunks which she left in his charge with the greatest care. They had been especially recommended to him by Madame Crawley. They were not, however, found to be particularly valuable when opened some time after.

But before she went to join her husband in the Belgic capital, Mrs. Crawley made an expedition into England, leaving behind her her little son upon the continent, under the care of her French maid.

The parting between Rebecca and the little Rawdon did not cause either party much pain. She had not, to say truth, seen much of the young gentleman since his birth. After the amiable fashion of French mothers, she had placed him out at nurse in a village in the neigh-

bourhood of Paris, where little Rawdon passed the first months of his life, not unhappily, with a numerous family of foster-brothers in wooden shoes. His father would ride over many a time to see him here, and the elder Rawdon's paternal heart glowed to see him rosy and dirty, shouting lustily, and happy in the making of mud-pies under the superintendence of the gardener's wife, his nurse.

Rebecca did not care much to go and see the son and heir. Once he spoiled a new dove-coloured pelisse of hers. He preferred his nurse's caresses to his mamma's, and when finally he quitted that jolly nurse and almost parent, he cried loudly for hours. He was only consoled by his mother's promise that he should return to his nurse the next day; indeed the nurse herself, who probably would have been pained at the parting too, was told that the child would immediately be restored to her, and for some time awaited quite anxiously his return.

In fact, our friends may be said to have been among the first of that brood of hardy English adventurers who have subsequently invaded the Continent, and swindled in all the capitals of Europe. The respect in those happy days of 1817–18 was very great for the wealth and honour of Britons. They had not then learned, as I am told, to haggle for bargains with the pertinacity which now distinguishes them. The great cities of Europe had not been as yet open to the enterprise of our rascals. And whereas there is now hardly a town of France or Italy in which you shall not see some noble countryman of our own, with that happy swagger and insolence of demeanour which we carry everywhere, swindling inn-landlords, passing fictitious cheques upon credulous bankers, robbing coach-makers of their car-

riages, goldsmiths of their trinkets, easy travellers of their money at cards,—even public libraries of their books:—thirty years ago you needed but to be a Milor Anglais, travelling in a private carriage, and credit was at your hand wherever you chose to seek it, and gentlemen, instead of cheating, were cheated. It was not for some weeks after the Crawleys' departure that the landlord of the hotel which they occupied during their residence at Paris, found out the losses which he had sustained: not until Madame Marabou, the milliner, made repeated visits with her little bill for articles supplied to Madame Crawley; not until Monsieur Didelot from Boule d'Or in the Palais Royal had asked half-a-dozen times whether cette charmante Miladi who had bought watches and bracelets of him was de retour. It is a fact that even the poor gardener's wife, who had nursed Madame's child, was never paid after the first six months for that supply of the milk of human kindness with which she had furnished the lusty and healthy little Rawdon. No, not even the nurse was paid—the Crawleys were in too great a hurry to remember their trifling debt to her. As for the landlord of the hotel, his curses against the English nation were violent for the rest of his natural life. He asked all travellers whether they knew a certain Colonel Lor Crawley—avec sa femme—une petite dame, très spirituelle. *"Ah, Monsieur!"* he would add—*" ils m'ont affreusement volé."* It was melancholy to hear his accents as he spoke of that catastrophe.

Rebecca's object in her journey to London was to effect a kind of compromise with her husband's numerous creditors, and by offering them a dividend of ninepence or a shilling in the pound, to secure a return for

Mrs. Rawdon's departure
from Paris

him into his own country. It does not become us to trace the steps which she took in the conduct of this most difficult negotiation; but, having shown them to their satisfaction, that the sum which she was empowered to offer was all her husband's available capital, and having convinced them that Colonel Crawley would prefer a perpetual retirement on the Continent to a residence in this country with his debts unsettled; having proved to them that there was no possibility of money accruing to him from other quarters, and no earthly chance of their getting a larger dividend than that which she was empowered to offer, she brought the Colonel's creditors unanimously to accept her proposals, and purchased with fifteen hundred pounds of ready money, more than ten times that amount of debts.

Mrs. Crawley employed no lawyer in the transaction. The matter was so simple, to have or to leave, as she justly observed, that she made the lawyers of the creditors themselves do the business. And Mr. Lewis representing Mr. Davids, of Red Lion Square, and Mr. Moss acting for Mr. Manasseh of Cursitor Street (chief creditors of the Colonel's), complimented his lady upon the brilliant way in which she did business, and declared that there was no professional man who could beat her.

Rebecca received their congratulations with perfect modesty; ordered a bottle of sherry and a bread cake to the little dingy lodgings where she dwelt, while conducting the business, to treat the enemy's lawyers: shook hands with them at parting, in excellent good humour, and returned straightway to the Continent, to rejoin her husband and son, and acquaint the former with the glad news of his entire liberation. As for the latter, he had been considerably neglected during his mother's absence

by Mademoiselle Geneviève, her French maid; for that young woman, contracting an attachment for a soldier in the garrison of Calais, forgot her charge in the society of this *militaire,* and little Rawdon very narrowly escaped drowning on Calais sands at this period, where the absent Geneviève had left and lost him.

And so, Colonel and Mrs. Crawley came to London: and it is at their house in Curzon Street, May Fair, that they really showed the skill which must be possessed by those who would live on the resources above named.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED

IN the first place, and as a matter of the greatest necessity, we are bound to describe how a house may be got for nothing a-year. These mansions are to be had either unfurnished, where, if you have credit with Messrs. Gillows or Bantings, you can get them splendidly *montées* and decorated entirely according to your own fancy; or they are to be let furnished; a less troublesome and complicated arrangement to most parties. It was so that Crawley and his wife preferred to hire their house.

Before Mr. Bowls came to preside over Miss Crawley's house and cellar in Park Lane, that lady had had for a butler a Mr. Raggles, who was born on the family estate of Queen's Crawley, and indeed was a younger son of a gardener there. By good conduct, a handsome person and calves, and a grave demeanour, Raggles rose from the knife-board to the foot-board of the carriage; from the foot-board to the butler's pantry. When he had been a certain number of years at the head of Miss Crawley's establishment, where he had had good wages, fat perquisites, and plenty of opportunities of saving, he announced that he was about to contract a matrimonial alliance with a late cook of Miss Crawley's, who

had subsisted in an honourable manner by the exercise of a mangle, and the keeping of a small greengrocer's shop in the neighbourhood. The truth is, that the ceremony had been clandestinely performed some years back; although the news of Mr. Raggles' marriage was first brought to Miss Crawley by a little boy and girl of seven and eight years of age, whose continual presence in the kitchen had attracted the attention of Miss Briggs.

Mr. Raggles then retired and personally undertook the superintendence of the small shop and the greens. He added milk and cream, eggs and country-fed pork to his stores, contenting himself, whilst other retired butlers were vending spirits in public-houses, by dealing in the simplest country produce. And having a good connection amongst the butlers in the neighbourhood, and a snug back parlour where he and Mrs. Raggles received them, his milk, cream, and eggs got to be adopted by many of the fraternity, and his profits increased every year. Year after year he quietly and modestly amassed money, and when at length that snug and complete bachelor's residence at No. 201, Curzon Street, May Fair, lately the residence of the Honourable Frederick Deuceace, gone abroad, with its rich and appropriate furniture by the first makers, was brought to the hammer, who should go in and purchase the lease and furniture of the house but Charles Raggles? A part of the money he borrowed, it is true, and at rather a high interest, from a brother butler, but the chief part he paid down, and it was with no small pride that Mrs. Raggles found herself sleeping in a bed of carved mahogany, with silk curtains, with a prodigious cheval glass opposite to her, and a wardrobe which would contain her, and Raggles, and all the family.

Of course, they did not intend to occupy permanently an apartment so splendid. It was in order to let the house again that Raggles purchased it. As soon as a tenant was found, he subsided into the green-grocer's shop once more; but a happy thing it was for him to walk out of that tenement and into Curzon Street, and there survey his house—his own house—with geraniums in the window and a carved bronze knocker. The footman occasionally lounging at the area railing, treated him with respect; the cook took her green stuff at his house and called him Mr. Landlord; and there was not one thing the tenants did, or one dish which they had for dinner, that Raggles might not know of, if he liked.

He was a good man; good and happy. The house brought him in so handsome a yearly income, that he was determined to send his children to good schools, and accordingly, regardless of expense, Charles was sent to boarding at Dr. Swishtail's, Sugar-cane Lodge, and little Matilda to Miss Peckover's Laurentium House, Clapham.

Raggles loved and adored the Crawley family as the author of all his prosperity in life. He had a silhouette of his mistress in his back shop, and a drawing of the Porter's Lodge at Queen's Crawley, done by that spinster herself in India ink—and the only addition he made to the decorations of the Curzon Street House was a print of Queen's Crawley in Hampshire, the Seat of Sir Walpole Crawley, Baronet, who was represented in a gilded car drawn by six white horses, and passing by a lake covered with swans, and barges containing ladies in hoops, and musicians with flags and periwigs. Indeed Raggles thought there was no such palace in all the world, and no such august family.

As luck would have it, Raggles' house in Curzon Street was to let when Rawdon and his wife returned to London. The Colonel knew it and its owner quite well; the latter's connexion with the Crawley family had been kept up constantly, for Raggles helped Mr. Bowls whenever Miss Crawley received friends. And the old man not only let his house to the Colonel, but officiated as his butler whenever he had company; Mrs. Raggles operating in the kitchen below, and sending up dinners of which old Miss Crawley herself might have approved. This was the way, then, Crawley got his house for nothing; for though Raggles had to pay taxes and rates, and the interest of the mortgage to the brother butler; and the insurance of his life; and the charges for his children at school; and the value of the meat and drink which his own family—and for a time that of Colonel Crawley too—consumed; and though the poor wretch was utterly ruined by the transaction, his children being flung on the streets, and himself driven into the Fleet Prison: yet somebody must pay even for gentlemen who live for nothing a-year—and so it was this unlucky Raggles was made the representative of Colonel Crawley's defective capital.

I wonder how many families are driven to roguery and to ruin by great practitioners in Crawley's way?—how many great noblemen rob their petty tradesmen, condescend to swindle their poor retainers out of wretched little sums, and cheat for a few shillings? When we read that a noble nobleman has left for the continent, or that another noble nobleman has an execution in his house—and that one or other owes six or seven millions, the defeat seems glorious even, and we respect the victim in the vastness of his ruin. But who pities a

poor barber who can't get his money for powdering the footmen's heads; or a poor carpenter who has ruined himself by fixing up ornaments and pavilions for my lady's *déjeuner;* or the poor devil of a tailor whom the steward patronises, and who has pledged all he is worth, and more, to get the liveries ready, which my lord has done him the honour to bespeak?—When the great house tumbles down, these miserable wretches fall under it unnoticed: as they say in the old legends, before a man goes to the devil himself, he sends plenty of other souls thither.

Rawdon and his wife generously gave their patronage to all such of Miss Crawley's tradesmen and purveyors as chose to serve them. Some were willing enough, especially the poor ones. It was wonderful to see the pertinacity with which the washerwoman from Tooting brought the cart every Saturday, and her bills week after week. Mr. Raggles himself had to supply the green-groceries. The bill for servants' porter at the Fortune of War public house is a curiosity in the chronicles of beer. Every servant also was owed the greater part of his wages, and thus kept up perforce an interest in the house. Nobody in fact was paid. Not the blacksmith who opened the lock; nor the glazier who mended the pane; nor the jobber who let the carriage; nor the groom who drove it; nor the butcher who provided the leg of mutton; nor the coals which roasted it; nor the cook who basted it; nor the servants who ate it: and this I am given to understand is not unfrequently the way in which people live elegantly on nothing a-year.

In a little town such things cannot be done without remark. We know there the quantity of milk our neighbour takes, and espy the joint or the fowls which are

going in for his dinner. So, probably, 200 and 202 in Curzon Street might know what was going on in the house between them, the servants communicating through the area-railings; but Crawley and his wife and his friends did not know 200 and 202. When you came to 201 there was a hearty welcome, a kind smile, a good dinner, and a jolly shake of the hand from the host and hostess there, just for all the world, as if they had been undisputed masters of three or four thousand a year—and so they were, not in money, but in produce and labour—if they did not pay for the mutton, they had it: if they did not give bullion in exchange for their wine, how should we know? Never was better claret at any man's table than at honest Rawdon's; dinners more gay and neatly served. His drawing rooms were the prettiest, little, modest salons conceivable: they were decorated with the greatest taste, and a thousand knick-knacks from Paris, by Rebecca: and when she sate at her piano trilling songs with a lightsome heart, the stranger voted himself in a little paradise of domestic comfort, and agreed that if the husband was rather stupid, the wife was charming, and the dinners the pleasantest in the world.

Rebecca's wit, cleverness, and flippancy, made her speedily the vogue in London among a certain class. You saw demure chariots at her door, out of which stepped very great people. You beheld her carriage in the Park, surrounded by dandies of note. The little box in the third tier of the Opera was crowded with heads constantly changing; but it must be confessed that the ladies held aloof from her, and that their doors were shut to our little adventurer.

With regard to the world of female fashion and its

customs, the present writer of course can only speak at second hand. A man can no more penetrate or understand those mysteries than he can know what the ladies talk about when they go up stairs after dinner. It is only by inquiry and perseverance, that one sometimes gets hints of those secrets; and by a similar diligence every person who treads the Pall Mall pavement and frequents the clubs of this metropolis, knows, either through his own experience or through some acquaintance with whom he plays at billiards or shares the joint, something about the genteel world of London, and how, as there are men (such as Rawdon Crawley, whose position we mentioned before), who cut a good figure to the eyes of the ignorant world and to the apprentices in the Park, who behold them consorting with the most notorious dandies there, so there are ladies, who may be called men's women, being welcomed entirely by all the gentlemen, and cut or slighted by all their wives. Mrs. Firebrace is of this sort; the lady with the beautiful fair ringlets whom you see every day in Hyde Park, surrounded by the greatest and most famous dandies of this empire. Mrs. Rockwood is another, whose parties are announced laboriously in the fashionable newspapers, and with whom you see that all sorts of ambassadors and great noblemen dine; and many more might be mentioned had they to do with the history at present in hand. But while simple folks who are out of the world, or country people with a taste for the genteel, behold these ladies in their seeming glory in public places, or envy them from afar off, persons who are better instructed could inform them that these envied ladies have no more chance of establishing themselves in " Society," than the benighted squire's wife in Somersetshire, who reads of

their doings in the *Morning Post.* Men living about London are aware of these awful truths. You hear how pitilessly many ladies of seeming rank and wealth are excluded from this "Society." The frantic efforts which they make to enter this circle, the meannesses to which they submit, the insults which they undergo, are matters of wonder to those who take human or womankind for a study; and the pursuit of fashion under difficulties would be a fine theme for any very great person who had the wit, the leisure, and the knowledge of the English language necessary for the compiling of such a history.

Now the few female acquaintances whom Mrs. Crawley had known abroad, not only declined to visit her when she came to this side of the Channel, but cut her severely when they met in public places. It was curious to see how the great ladies forgot her, and no doubt not altogether a pleasant study to Rebecca. When Lady Bareacres met her in the waiting-room at the Opera, she gathered her daughters about her as if they would be contaminated by a touch of Becky, and retreating a step or two, placed herself in front of them, and stared at her little enemy. To stare Becky out of countenance required a severer glance than even the frigid old Bareacres could shoot out of her dismal eyes. When Lady de la Mole, who had ridden a score of times by Becky's side at Brussels, met Mrs. Crawley's open carriage in Hyde Park, her Ladyship was quite blind, and could not in the least recognise her former friend. Even Mrs. Blenkinsop, the banker's wife, cut her at church. Becky went regularly to church now; it was edifying to see her enter there with Rawdon by her side, carrying a couple of large gilt prayer-books, and after-

wards going through the ceremony with the gravest resignation.

Rawdon at first felt very acutely the slights which were passed upon his wife, and was inclined to be gloomy and savage. He talked of calling out the husbands or brothers of every one of the insolent women who did not pay a proper respect to his wife; and it was only by the strongest commands and entreaties on her part, that he was brought into keeping a decent behaviour. "You can't shoot me into society," she said, good-naturedly. "Remember, my dear, that I was but a governess, and you, you poor silly old man, have the worst reputation for debt, and dice, and all sorts of wickedness. We shall get quite as many friends as we want by and by, and in the mean while you must be a good boy, and obey your schoolmistress in everything she tells you to do. When we heard that your aunt had left almost everything to Pitt and his wife, do you remember what a rage you were in? You would have told all Paris, if I had not made you keep your temper, and where would you have been now?—in prison at Ste. Pélagie for debt, and not established in London in a handsome house, with every comfort about you—you were in such a fury you were ready to murder your brother, you wicked Cain you, and what good would have come of remaining angry? All the rage in the world won't get us your aunt's money; and it is much better that we should be friends with your brother's family than enemies, as those foolish Butes are. When your father dies, Queen's Crawley will be a pleasant house for you and me to pass the winter in. If we are ruined, you can carve and take charge of the stable, and I can be a governess to Lady Jane's children. Ruined! fiddlededee! I will get you a

good place before that; or Pitt and his little boy will die, and we will be Sir Rawdon and my lady. While there is life, there is hope, my dear, and I intend to make a man of you yet. Who sold your horses for you? Who paid your debts for you?" Rawdon was obliged to confess that he owed all these benefits to his wife, and to trust himself to her guidance for the future.

Indeed, when Miss Crawley quitted the world, and that money for which all her relatives had been fighting so eagerly was finally left to Pitt, Bute Crawley, who found that only five thousand pounds had been left to him instead of the twenty upon which he calculated, was in such a fury at his disappointment, that he vented it in savage abuse upon his nephew; and the quarrel always rankling between them ended in an utter breach of intercourse. Rawdon Crawley's conduct, on the other hand, who got but a hundred pounds, was such as to astonish his brother and delight his sister-in-law, who was disposed to look kindly upon all the members of her husband's family. He wrote to his brother a very frank, manly, good-humoured letter from Paris. He was aware, he said, that by his own marriage he had forfeited his aunt's favour; and though he did not disguise his disappointment that she should have been so entirely relentless towards him, he was glad that the money was still kept in their branch of the family, and heartily congratulated his brother on his good fortune. He sent his affectionate remembrances to his sister, and hoped to have her good-will for Mrs. Rawdon; and the letter concluded with a postscript to Pitt in the latter lady's own hand-writing. She, too, begged to join in her husband's congratulations. She should ever remember Mr. Crawley's kindness to her in early days when she was a friend-

less orphan, the instructress of his little sisters, in whose welfare she still took the tenderest interest. She wished him every happiness in his married life, and, asking his permission to offer her remembrances to Lady Jane (of whose goodness all the world informed her), she hoped that one day she might be allowed to present her little boy to his uncle and aunt, and begged to bespeak for him their good-will and protection.

Pitt Crawley received this communication very graciously—more graciously than Miss Crawley had received some of Rebecca's previous compositions in Rawdon's hand-writing; and as for Lady Jane, she was so charmed with the letter, that she expected her husband would instantly divide his aunt's legacy into two equal portions, and send off one-half to his brother at Paris.

To her ladyship's surprise, however, Pitt declined to accommodate his brother with a cheque for thirty thousand pounds. But he made Rawdon a handsome offer of his hand whenever the latter should come to England and choose to take it; and, thanking Mrs. Crawley for her good opinion of himself and Lady Jane, he graciously pronounced his willingness to take any opportunity to serve her little boy.

Thus an almost reconciliation was brought about between the brothers. When Rebecca came to town Pitt and his wife were not in London. Many a time she drove by the old door in Park Lane to see whether they had taken possession of Miss Crawley's house there. But the new family did not make its appearance; it was only through Raggles that she heard of their movements—how Miss Crawley's domestics had been dismissed with decent gratuities, and how Mr. Pitt had only once made his appearance in London, when he

stopped for a few days at the house, did business with his lawyers there, and sold off all Miss Crawley's French novels to a bookseller out of Bond Street. Becky had reasons of her own which caused her to long for the arrival of her new relation. "When Lady Jane comes," thought she, "she shall be my sponsor in London society; and as for the women! bah! the women will ask me when they find the men want to see me."

An article as necessary to a lady in this position as her brougham or her bouquet, is her companion. I have always admired the way in which the tender creatures, who cannot exist without sympathy, hire an exceedingly plain friend of their own sex from whom they are almost inseparable. The sight of that inevitable woman in her faded gown seated behind her dear friend in the opera-box, or occupying the back seat of the barouche, is always a wholesome and moral one to me, as jolly a reminder as that of the Death's-head which figured in the repasts of Egyptian *bon-vivants,* a strange sardonic memorial of Vanity Fair. What?—even battered, brazen, beautiful, conscienceless, heartless, Mrs. Firebrace, whose father died of her shame: even lovely, daring, Mrs. Mantrap, who will ride at any fence which any man in England will take, and who drives her greys in the Park, while her mother keeps a huckster's stall in Bath still;—even those who are so bold, one might fancy they could face anything, dare not face the world without a female friend. They must have somebody to cling to, the affectionate creatures! And you will hardly see them in any public place without a shabby companion in a dyed silk, sitting somewhere in the shade close behind them.

"Rawdon," said Becky, very late one night, as a party

of gentlemen were seated round her crackling drawing-room fire (for the men came to her house to finish the night; and she had ice and coffee for them, the best in London): "I must have a sheep-dog."

"A what?" said Rawdon, looking up from an *écarté* table.

"A sheep-dog!" said young Lord Southdown. "My dear Mrs. Crawley, what a fancy! Why not have a Danish dog? I know of one as big as a camel-leopard, by Jove. It would almost pull your brougham. Or a Persian grey-hound, eh? (I propose, if you please); or a little pug that would go into one of Lord Steyne's snuff-boxes? There's a man at Bayswater got one with such a nose that you might,—I mark the king and play,—that you might hang your hat on it."

"I mark the trick," Rawdon gravely said. He attended to his game commonly, and didn't much meddle with the conversation except when it was about horses and betting.

"What *can* you want with a shepherd's dog?" the lively little Southdown continued.

"I mean a *moral* shepherd's dog," said Becky, laughing, and looking up at Lord Steyne.

"What the devil's that?" said his Lordship.

"A dog to keep the wolves off me," Rebecca continued. "A companion."

"Dear little innocent lamb, you want one," said the Marquis; and his jaw thrust out, and he began to grin hideously, his little eyes leering towards Rebecca.

The great Lord of Steyne was standing by the fire sipping coffee. The fire crackled and blazed pleasantly. There was a score of candles sparkling round the mantelpiece, in all sorts of quaint sconces, of gilt and bronze

and porcelain. They lighted up Rebecca's figure to admiration, as she sate on a sofa covered with a pattern of gaudy flowers. She was in a pink dress, that looked as fresh as a rose; her dazzling white arms and shoulders were half covered with a thin hazy scarf through which they sparkled; her hair hung in curls round her neck; one of her little feet peeped out from the fresh crisp folds of the silk: the prettiest little foot in the prettiest little sandal in the finest silk stocking in the world.

The candles lighted up Lord Steyne's shining bald head, which was fringed with red hair. He had thick bushy eyebrows, with little twinkling bloodshot eyes, surrounded by a thousand wrinkles. His jaw was underhung, and when he laughed, two white buck-teeth protruded themselves and glistened savagely in the midst of the grin. He had been dining with royal personages, and wore his garter and ribbon. A short man was his Lordship, broad-chested, and bow-legged, but proud of the fineness of his foot and ankle, and always caressing his garter-knee.

"And so the Shepherd is not enough," said he, "to defend his lambkin?"

"The Shepherd is too fond of playing at cards and going to his clubs," answered Becky, laughing.

"'Gad, what a debauched Corydon!" said my lord—"what a mouth for a pipe!"

"I take your three to two," here said Rawdon, at the card-table.

"Hark at Melibœus," snarled the noble Marquis; "he's pastorally occupied too: he's shearing a Southdown. What an innocent mutton, hey? Damme, what a snowy fleece!"

Rebecca's eyes shot out gleams of scornful humour.

"My lord," she said, "you are a knight of the Order." He had the collar round his neck, indeed—a gift of the restored Princes of Spain.

Lord Steyne in early life had been notorious for his daring and his success at play. He had sat up two days and two nights with Mr. Fox at hazard. He had won money of the most august personages of the realm: he had won his marquisate, it was said, at the gaming-table; but he did not like an allusion to those bygone *fredaines*. Rebecca saw the scowl gathering over his heavy brow.

She rose up from her sofa, and went and took his coffee cup out of his hand with a little curtsey. "Yes," she said, "I must get a watch-dog. But he won't bark at *you*." And, going into the other drawing-room, she sate down to the piano, and began to sing little French songs in such a charming, thrilling voice, that the mollified nobleman speedily followed her into that chamber, and might be seen nodding his head and bowing time over her.

Rawdon and his friend meanwhile played *écarté* until they had enough. The Colonel won; but, say that he won ever so much and often, nights like these, which occurred many times in the week—his wife having all the talk and all the admiration, and he sitting silent without the circle, not comprehending a word of the jokes, the allusions, the mystical language within—must have been rather wearisome to the ex-dragoon.

"How is Mrs. Crawley's husband?" Lord Steyne used to say to him by way of a good day when they met: and indeed that was now his avocation in life. He was Colonel Crawley no more. He was Mrs. Crawley's husband.

About the little Rawdon, if nothing has been said all this while, it is because he is hidden up stairs in a garret somewhere, or has crawled below into the kitchen for companionship. His mother scarcely ever took notice of him. He passed the days with his French *bonne* as long as that domestic remained in Mr. Crawley's family, and when the Frenchwoman went away, the little fellow, howling in the loneliness of the night, had compassion taken on him by a housemaid, who took him out of his solitary nursery into her bed in the garret hard by, and comforted him.

Rebecca, my Lord Steyne, and one or two more were in the drawing-room taking tea after the Opera, when this shouting was heard overhead. "It's my cherub crying for his nurse," she said. She did not offer to move to go and see the child. "Don't agitate your feelings by going to look for him," said Lord Steyne sardonically. "Bah!" replied the other, with a sort of blush, "he'll cry himself to sleep;" and they fell to talking about the Opera.

Rawdon had stolen off though, to look after his son and heir; and came back to the company when he found that honest Dolly was consoling the child. The Colonel's dressing-room was in those upper regions. He used to see the boy there in private. They had interviews together every morning when he shaved; Rawdon minor sitting on a box by his father's side and watching the operation with never ceasing pleasure. He and the sire were great friends. The father would bring him sweetmeats from the dessert, and hide them in a certain old epaulet box, where the child went to seek them, and laughed with joy on discovering the treasure: laughed, but not too loud: for mamma was below asleep and must

not be disturbed. She did not go to rest till very late, and seldom rose till after noon.

Rawdon bought the boy plenty of picture-books, and crammed his nursery with toys. Its walls were covered with pictures pasted up by the father's own hand, and purchased by him for ready money. When he was off duty with Mrs. Rawdon in the Park, he would sit up here, passing hours with the boy; who rode on his chest, who pulled his great moustachios as if they were driving-reins, and spent days with him in indefatigable gambols. The room was a low room, and once, when the child was not five years old, his father, who was tossing him wildly up in his arms, hit the poor little chap's skull so violently against the ceiling that he almost dropped the child, so terrified was he at the disaster.

Rawdon minor had made up his face for a tremendous howl—the severity of the blow indeed authorised that indulgence: but just as he was going to begin, the father interposed.

"For God's sake, Rawdy, don't wake mamma," he cried. And the child looking in a very hard and piteous way at his father, bit his lips, clenched his hands, and didn't cry a bit. Rawdon told that story at the clubs, at the mess, to everybody in town. "By Gad, sir," he explained to the public in general, "what a good plucked one that boy of mine is—what a trump he is! I half sent his head through the ceiling, by Gad, and he wouldn't cry for fear of disturbing his mother."

Sometimes—once or twice in a week—that lady visited the upper regions in which the child lived. She came like a vivified figure out of the *Magasin des Modes*—blandly smiling in the most beautiful new clothes and little gloves and boots. Wonderful scarfs, laces, and jewels

glittered about her. She had always a new bonnet on, and flowers bloomed perpetually in it: or else magnificent curling ostrich feathers, soft and snowy as camellias. She nodded twice or thrice patronisingly to the little boy, who looked up from his dinner or from the pictures of soldiers he was painting. When she left the room, an odour of rose, or some other magical fragrance lingered about the nursery. She was an unearthly being in his eyes, superior to his father—to all the world: to be worshipped and admired at a distance. To drive with that lady in the carriage was an awful rite: he sate up in the back seat, and did not dare to speak: he gazed with all his eyes at the beautifully dressed princess opposite to him. Gentlemen on splendid prancing horses came up, and smiled and talked with her. How her eyes beamed upon all of them! Her hand used to quiver and wave gracefully as they passed. When he went out with her he had his new red dress on. His old brown holland was good enough when he stayed at home. Sometimes, when she was away, and Dolly his maid was making his bed, he came into his mother's room. It was as the abode of a fairy to him—a mystic chamber of splendour and delights. There in the wardrobe hung those wonderful robes—pink and blue, and many-tinted. There was the jewel-case, silver-clasped: and the wondrous bronze hand on the dressing-table, glistening all over with a hundred rings. There was the cheval-glass, that miracle of art, in which he could just see his own wondering head, and the reflection of Dolly (queerly distorted, and as if up in the ceiling), plumping and patting the pillows of the bed. O, thou poor lonely little benighted boy! Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts of little children; and here was one who was worshipping a stone!

Now Rawdon Crawley, rascal as the Colonel was, had certain manly tendencies of affection in his heart, and could love a child and a woman still. For Rawdon minor he had a great secret tenderness then, which did not escape Rebecca, though she did not talk about it to her husband. It did not annoy her: she was too good-natured. It only increased her scorn for him. He felt somehow ashamed of this paternal softness, and hid it from his wife—only indulging in it when alone with the boy.

He used to take him out of mornings, when they would go to the stables together and to the Park. Little Lord Southdown, the best-natured of men, who would make you a present of the hat from his head, and whose main occupation in life was to buy knick-knacks that he might give them away afterwards, bought the little chap a pony not much bigger than a large rat, the donor said, and on this little black Shetland pigmy young Rawdon's great father was pleased to mount the boy, and to walk by his side in the Park. It pleased him to see his old quarters, and his old fellow-guardsmen at Knightsbridge: he had begun to think of his bachelorhood with something like regret. The old troopers were glad to recognise their ancient officer, and dandle the little Colonel. Colonel Crawley found dining at mess and with his brother-officers very pleasant. "Hang it, I ain't clever enough for her—I know it. She won't miss me," he used to say: and he was right: his wife did not miss him.

Rebecca was fond of her husband. She was always perfectly good-humoured and kind to him. She did not even show her scorn much for him; perhaps she liked him the better for being a fool. He was her upper servant and *maître d'hôtel.* He went on her errands: obeyed

her orders without question: drove in the carriage in the ring with her without repining; took her to the Opera-box; solaced himself at his club during the performance, and came punctually back to fetch her when due. He would have liked her to be a little fonder of the boy: but even to that he reconciled himself. "Hang it, you know she's so clever," he said, "and I'm not literary and that, you know." For, as we have said before, it requires no great wisdom to be able to win at cards and billiards, and Rawdon made no pretensions to any other sort of skill.

When the companion came, his domestic duties became very light. His wife encouraged him to dine abroad: she would let him off duty at the Opera. "Don't stay and stupefy yourself at home to-night, my dear," she would say. "Some men are coming who will only bore you. I would not ask them, but you know it's for your good, and now I have a sheep-dog, I need not be afraid to be alone."

"A sheep-dog—a companion! Becky Sharp with a companion! Isn't it good fun?" thought Mrs. Crawley to herself. The notion tickled hugely her sense of humour.

One Sunday morning, as Rawdon Crawley, his little son, and the pony were taking their accustomed walk in the Park, they passed by an old acquaintance of the Colonel's, Corporal Clink, of the regiment, who was in conversation with a friend, an old gentleman, who held a boy in his arms about the age of little Rawdon. This other youngster had seized hold of the Waterloo medal which the Corporal wore, and was examining it with delight.

Georgy makes acquaintance
with a Waterloo Man

"Good morning, your honour," said Clink, in reply to the "How do, Clink?" of the Colonel. "This 'ere young gentleman is about the little Colonel's age, sir," continued the Corporal.

"His father was a Waterloo man, too," said the old gentleman, who carried the boy. "Wasn't he, Georgy?"

"Yes," said Georgy. He and the little chap on the pony were looking at each other with all their might—solemnly scanning each other as children do.

"In a line regiment," Clink said, with a patronising air.

"He was a Captain in the —th regiment," said the old gentleman rather pompously. "Captain George Osborne, sir—perhaps you knew him. He died the death of a hero, sir, fighting against the Corsican tyrant."

Colonel Crawley blushed quite red. "I knew him very well, sir," he said, "and his wife, his dear little wife, sir—how is she?"

"She is my daughter, sir," said the old gentleman, putting down the boy, and taking out a card with great solemnity, which he handed to the Colonel. On it was written—

"Mr. Sedley, Sole Agent for the Black Diamond and Anti-Cinder Coal Association, Bunker's Wharf, Thames Street, and Anna-Maria Cottages, Fulham Road West."

Little Georgy went up and looked at the Shetland pony.

"Should you like to have a ride?" said Rawdon minor from the saddle.

"Yes," said Georgy. The Colonel, who had been

looking at him with some interest, took up the child and put him on the pony behind Rawdon minor.

"Take hold of him, Georgy," he said—"take my little boy round the waist—his name is Rawdon." And both the children began to laugh.

"You won't see a prettier pair, I think, *this* summer's day, sir," said the good-natured Corporal; and the Colonel, the Corporal, and old Mr. Sedley with his umbrella, walked by the side of the children.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

A FAMILY IN A VERY SMALL WAY

WE must suppose little George Osborne has ridden from Knightsbridge towards Fulham, and will stop and make inquiries at that village regarding some friends whom we have left there. How is Mrs. Amelia after the storm of Waterloo? Is she living and thriving? What has come of Major Dobbin, whose cab was always hankering about her premises? and is there any news of the Collector of Boggley Wollah? The facts concerning the latter are briefly these:

Our worthy fat friend Joseph Sedley returned to India not long after his escape from Brussels. Either his furlough was up, or he dreaded to meet any witnesses of his Waterloo flight. However it might be, he went back to his duties in Bengal very soon after Napoleon had taken up his residence at St. Helena, where Jos saw the ex-Emperor. To hear Mr. Sedley talk on board ship you would have supposed that it was not the first time he and the Corsican had met, and that the civilian had bearded the French General at Mount St. John. He had a thousand anecdotes about the famous battles;

he knew the position of every regiment, and the loss which each had incurred. He did not deny that he had been concerned in those victories—that he had been with the army, and carried dispatches for the Duke of Wellington. And he described what the Duke did and said on every conceivable moment of the day of Waterloo, with such an accurate knowledge of his Grace's sentiments and proceedings, that it was clear he must have been by the conqueror's side throughout the day; though, as a non-combatant, his name was not mentioned in the public documents relative to the battle. Perhaps he actually worked himself up to believe that he had been engaged with the army; certain it is that he made a prodigious sensation for some time at Calcutta, and was called Waterloo Sedley during the whole of his subsequent stay in Bengal.

The bills which Jos had given for the purchase of those unlucky horses were paid without question by him and his agents. He never was heard to allude to the bargain, and nobody knows for a certainty what became of the horses, or how he got rid of them, or of Isidor, his Belgian servant, who sold a grey horse, very like the one which Jos rode, at Valenciennes sometime during the autumn of 1815.

Jos's London agents had orders to pay one hundred and twenty pounds yearly to his parents at Fulham. It was the chief support of the old couple; for Mr. Sedley's speculations in life subsequent to his bankruptcy did not by any means retrieve the broken old gentleman's fortune. He tried to be a wine-merchant, a coal-merchant, a commission lottery agent, &c., &c. He sent round prospectuses to his friends whenever he took a new trade, and ordered a new brass plate for the door,

and talked pompously about making his fortune still. But Fortune never came back to the feeble and stricken old man. One by one his friends dropped off, and were weary of buying dear coals and bad wine from him; and there was only his wife in all the world who fancied, when he tottered off to the City of a morning, that he was still doing any business there. At evening he crawled slowly back; and he used to go of nights to a little club at a tavern, where he disposed of the finances of the nation. It was wonderful to hear him talk about millions, and agios, and discounts, and what Rothschild was doing, and Baring Brothers. He talked of such vast sums that the gentlemen of the club (the apothecary, the undertaker, the great carpenter and builder, the parish clerk, who was allowed to come stealthily, and Mr. Clapp, our old acquaintance,) respected the old gentleman. "I was better off once, sir," he did not fail to tell everybody who "used the room." "My son, sir, is at this minute chief magistrate of Ramgunge in the Presidency of Bengal, and touching his four thousand rupees per mensem. My daughter might be a Colonel's lady if she liked. I might draw upon my son, the first magistrate, sir, for two thousand pounds to-morrow, and Alexander would cash my bill, down, sir, down on the counter, sir. But the Sedleys were always a proud family." You and I, my dear reader, may drop into this condition one day: for have not many of our friends attained it? Our luck may fail: our powers forsake us: our place on the boards be taken by better and younger mimes—the chance of life roll away and leave us shattered and stranded. Then men will walk across the road when they meet you—or, worse still, hold you out a couple of fingers and patronise you in a pitying way

—then you will know, as soon as your back is turned, that your friend begins with a "Poor devil, what imprudences he has committed, what chances *that* chap has thrown away!" Well, well—a carriage and three thousand a-year is not the summit of the reward nor the end of God's judgment of men. If quacks prosper as often as they go to the wall—if zanies succeed and knaves arrive at fortune, and, *vice versâ*, sharing ill luck and prosperity for all the world like the ablest and most honest amongst us—I say, brother, the gifts and pleasures of Vanity Fair cannot be held of any great account, and that it is probable . . . . but we are wandering out of the domain of the story.

Had Mrs. Sedley been a woman of energy, she would have exerted it after her husband's ruin, and, occupying a large house, would have taken in boarders. The broken Sedley would have acted well as the boarding-house landlady's husband; the Munoz of private life; the titular lord and master: the carver, house-steward, and humble husband of the occupier of the dingy throne. I have seen men of good brains and breeding, and of good hopes and vigour once, who feasted squires and kept hunters in their youth, meekly cutting up legs of mutton for rancorous old harridans, and pretending to preside over their dreary tables—but Mrs. Sedley, we say, had not spirit enough to bustle about for "a few select inmates to join a cheerful musical family," such as one reads of in the *Times*. She was content to lie on the shore where fortune had stranded her—and you could see that the career of this old couple was over.

I don't think they were unhappy. Perhaps they were a little prouder in their downfall than in their prosperity. Mrs. Sedley was always a great person for her

landlady, Mrs. Clapp, when she descended and passed many hours with her in the basement or ornamented kitchen. The Irish maid Betty Flanagan's bonnets and ribbons, her sauciness, her idleness, her reckless prodigality of kitchen candles, her consumption of tea and sugar, and so forth, occupied and amused the old lady almost as much as the doings of her former household, when she had Sambo and the coachman, and a groom, and a footboy, and a housekeeper with a regiment of female domestics—her former household, about which the good lady talked a hundred times a-day. And besides Betty Flanagan, Mrs. Sedley had all the maids-of-all-work in the street to superintend. She knew how each tenant of the cottages paid or owed his little rent. She stepped aside when Mrs. Rougemont the actress passed with her dubious family. She flung up her head when Mrs. Pestler, the apothecary's lady, drove by in her husband's professional one-horse chaise. She had colloquies with the greengrocer about the pennorth of turnips which Mr. Sedley loved: she kept an eye upon the milkman, and the baker's boy; and made visitations to the butcher, who sold hundreds of oxen very likely with less ado than was made about Mrs. Sedley's loin of mutton: and she counted the potatoes under the joint on Sundays, on which days, drest in her best, she went to church twice and read Blair's Sermons in the evening.

On that day, for "business" prevented him on week days from taking such a pleasure, it was old Sedley's delight to take out his little grandson Georgy to the neighbouring Parks or Kensington Gardens, to see the soldiers or to feed the ducks. Georgy loved the red-coats, and his grandpapa told him how his father had been a famous soldier, and introduced him to many

sergeants and others with Waterloo medals on their breasts, to whom the old grandfather pompously presented the child as the son of Captain Osborne of the —th, who died gloriously on the glorious eighteenth. He has been known to treat some of these non-commissioned gentlemen to a glass of porter, and, indeed, in their first Sunday walks was disposed to spoil little Georgy, sadly gorging the boy with apples and parliament, to the detriment of his health—until Amelia declared that George should never go out with his grandpapa, unless the latter promised solemnly, and on his honour, not to give the child any cakes, lollipops, or stall produce whatever.

Between Mrs. Sedley and her daughter there was a sort of coolness about this boy, and a secret jealousy—for one evening in George's very early days, Amelia, who had been seated at work in their little parlour scarcely remarking that the old lady had quitted the room, ran up stairs instinctively to the nursery at the cries of the child, who had been asleep until that moment—and there found Mrs. Sedley in the act of surreptitiously administering Daffy's Elixir to the infant. Amelia, the gentlest and sweetest of every-day mortals, when she found this meddling with her maternal authority, thrilled and trembled all over with anger. Her cheeks, ordinarily pale, now flushed up, until they were as red as they used to be when she was a child of twelve years old. She seized the baby out of her mother's arms, and then grasped at the bottle, leaving the old lady gaping at her, furious, and holding the guilty tea-spoon.

Amelia flung the bottle crashing into the fire-place. "I will *not* have baby poisoned, mamma," cried Emmy, rocking the infant about violently with both her arms

round him, and turning with flashing eyes at her mother.

"Poisoned, Amelia!" said the old lady; "this language to me?"

"He shall not have any medicine but that which Mr. Pestler sends for him. He told me that Daffy's Elixir was poison."

"Very good: you think I'm a murderess then," replied Mrs. Sedley. "This is the language you use to your mother. I have met with misfortunes: I have sunk low in life: I have kept my carriage, and now walk on foot: but I did not know I was a murderess before, and thank you for the *news.*"

"Mamma," said the poor girl, who was always ready for tears—"you shouldn't be hard upon me. I—I

didn't mean—I mean, I did not wish to say you would do any wrong to this dear child: only—"

"O, no, my love,—only that I was a murderess; in which case, I had better go to the Old Bailey. Though I didn't poison *you,* when you were a child; but gave you the best of education, and the most expensive masters money could procure. Yes; I've nursed five children, and buried three: and the one I loved the best of all, and tended through croup, and teething, and measles, and hooping-cough; and brought up with foreign masters, regardless of expense, and with accomplishments at Minerva House—which I never had when I was a girl—when I was too glad to honour my father and mother, that I might live long in the land, and to be useful, and not to mope all day in my room and act the fine lady—says I'm a murderess. Ah, Mrs. Osborne! may *you* never nourish a viper in your bosom, that's *my* prayer."

"Mamma, mamma!" cried the bewildered girl: and the child in her arms set up a frantic chorus of shouts.

"A murderess, indeed! Go down on your knees and pray to God to cleanse your wicked ungrateful heart, Amelia, and may He forgive you as I do;" and Mrs. Sedley tossed out of the room, hissing out the word poison, once more, and so ending her charitable benediction.

Till the termination of her natural life, this breach between Mrs. Sedley and her daughter was never thoroughly mended. The quarrel gave the elder lady numberless advantages which she did not fail to turn to account with female ingenuity and perseverance. For instance, she scarcely spoke to Amelia for many weeks afterwards. She warned the domestics not to touch the

child, as Mrs. Osborne might be offended. She asked her daughter to see and satisfy herself that there was no poison prepared in the little daily messes that were concocted for Georgy. When neighbours asked after the boy's health, she referred them pointedly to Mrs. Osborne. *She* never ventured to ask whether the baby was well or not. *She* would not touch the child although he was her grandson, and own precious darling, for she was not *used* to children, and might kill it. And whenever Mr. Pestler came upon his healing inquisition, she received the Doctor with such a sarcastic and scornful demeanour, as made the surgeon declare that not Lady Thistlewood herself, whom he had the honour of attending professionally, could give herself greater airs than old Mrs. Sedley, from whom he never took a fee. And very likely Emmy was jealous too, upon her own part, as what mother is not, of those who would manage her children for her, or become candidates for the first place in their affections? It is certain that when anybody nursed the child, she was uneasy, and that she would no more allow Mrs. Clapp or the domestic to dress or tend him, than she would have let them wash her husband's miniature which hung up over her little bed:—the same little bed from which the poor girl had gone to his; and to which she retired now for many long, silent, tearful, but happy years.

In this room was all Amelia's heart and treasure. Here it was that she tended her boy, and watched him through the many ills of childhood, with a constant passion of love. The elder George returned in him somehow, only improved, and as if come back from heaven. In a hundred little tones, looks, and movements, the child was so like his father, that the widow's heart

thrilled as she held him to it; and he would often ask the cause of her tears. It was because of his likeness to his father, she did not scruple to tell him. She talked constantly to him about this dead father, and spoke of her love for George to the innocent and wondering child; much more than she ever had done to George himself, or to any confidante of her youth. To her parents she never talked about this matter; shrinking from baring her heart to them. Little George very likely could understand no better than they; but into his ears she poured her sentimental secrets unreservedly, and into his only. The very joy of this woman was a sort of grief, or so tender, at least, that its expression was tears. Her sensibilities were so weak and tremulous, that perhaps they ought not to be talked about in a book. I was told by Dr. Pestler (now a most flourishing lady's physician, with a sumptuous dark-green carriage, a prospect of speedy knighthood, and a house in Manchester Square), that her grief at weaning the child was a sight that would have unmanned a Herod. He was very softhearted many years ago, and his wife was mortally jealous of Mrs. Amelia, then and long afterwards.

Perhaps the Doctor's lady had good reason for her jealousy: most women shared it, of those who formed the small circle of Amelia's acquaintance, and were quite angry at the enthusiasm with which the other sex regarded her. For almost all men who came near her loved her; though no doubt they would be at a loss to tell you why. She was not brilliant, nor witty, nor wise overmuch, nor extraordinarily handsome. But wherever she went she touched and charmed every one of the male sex, as invariably as she awakened the scorn and incredulity of her own sisterhood. I think it was

her weakness which was her principal charm:—a kind of sweet submission and softness, which seemed to appeal to each man she met for his sympathy and protection. We have seen how in the regiment, though she spoke but to few of George's comrades there, all the swords of the young fellows at the mess-table would have leapt from their scabbards to fight round her; and so it was in the little narrow lodging-house and circle at Fulham, she interested and pleased everybody. If she had been Mrs. Mango herself, of the great house of Mango, Plantain, and Co., Crutched Friars, and the magnificent proprietress of the Pineries, Fulham, who gave summer *déjeuners* frequented by Dukes and Earls, and drove about the parish with magnificent yellow liveries and bay horses, such as the royal stables at Kensington themselves could not turn out—I say, had she been Mrs. Mango herself, or her son's wife, Lady Mary Mango (daughter of the Earl of Castlemouldy, who condescended to marry the head of the firm), the tradesmen of the neighbourhood could not pay her more honour than they invariably showed to the gentle young widow, when she passed by their doors, or made her humble purchases at their shops.

Thus it was not only Mr. Pestler, the medical man, but Mr. Linton, the young assistant, who doctored the servant maids and small tradesmen, and might be seen any day reading the *Times* in the surgery, who openly declared himself the slave of Mrs. Osborne. He was a personable young gentleman, more welcome at Mrs. Sedley's lodgings than his principal; and if anything went wrong with Georgy, he would drop in twice or thrice in the day, to see the little chap, and without so much as the thought of a fee. He would abstract loz-

enges, tamarinds, and other produce from the surgery-drawers for little George's benefit, and compounded draughts and mixtures for him of miraculous sweetness, so that it was quite a pleasure to the child to be ailing. He and Pestler, his chief, sate up two whole nights by the boy in that momentous and awful week when Georgy had the measles; and when you would have thought, from the mother's terror, that there had never been measles in the world before. Would they have done as much for other people? Did they sit up for the folks at the Pineries, when Ralph Plantagenet, and Gwendoline, and Guinever Mango had the same juvenile complaint? Did they sit up for little Mary Clapp, the landlord's daughter, who actually caught the disease of little Georgy? Truth compels one to say, no. They slept quite undisturbed, at least as far as she was concerned—pronounced hers to be a slight case, which would almost cure itself, sent her in a draught or two, and threw in bark when the child rallied, with perfect indifference, and just for form's sake.

Again, there was the little French chevalier opposite, who gave lessons in his native tongue at various schools in the neighbourhood, and who might be heard in his apartment of nights playing tremulous old gavottes and minuets, on a wheezy old fiddle. Whenever this powdered and courteous old man, who never missed a Sunday at the convent chapel at Hammersmith, and who was in all respects, thoughts, conduct, and bearing, utterly unlike the bearded savages of his nation, who curse perfidious Albion, and scowl at you from over their cigars, in the Quadrant arcades at the present day—whenever the old Chevalier de Talonrouge spoke of Mistress Osborne, he would first finish his pinch of snuff,

flick away the remaining particles of dust with a graceful wave of his hand, gather up his fingers again into a bunch, and, bringing them up to his mouth, blow them open with a kiss, exclaiming, *Ah! la divine créature!* He vowed and protested that when Amelia walked in the Brompton Lanes flowers grew in profusion under her feet. He called little Georgy Cupid, and asked him news of Venus, his mamma; and told the astonished Betty Flanagan that she was one of the Graces, and the favourite attendant of the *Reine des Amours*.

Instances might be multiplied of this easily gained and unconscious popularity. Did not Mr. Binny, the mild and genteel curate of the district chapel, which the family attended, call assiduously upon the widow, dandle the little boy on his knee, and offer to teach him Latin, to the anger of the elderly virgin, his sister, who kept house for him? "There is nothing in her, Beilby," the latter lady would say. "When she comes to tea here she does not speak a word during the whole evening. She is but a poor lackadaisical creature, and it is my belief has no heart at all. It is only her pretty face which all you gentlemen admire so. Miss Grits, who has five thousand pounds, and expectations besides, has twice as much character, and is a thousand times more agreeable to *my* taste; and if she were good-looking I know that you would think her perfection."

Very likely Miss Binny was right to a great extent. It *is* the pretty face which creates sympathy in the hearts of men, those wicked rogues. A woman may possess the wisdom and chastity of Minerva, and we give no heed to her, if she has a plain face. What folly will not a pair of bright eyes make pardonable? What dulness may not red lips and sweet accents render pleasant?

And so, with their usual sense of justice, ladies argue that because a woman is handsome, therefore she is a fool. Oh ladies, ladies! there are some of you who are neither handsome nor wise.

These are but trivial incidents to recount in the life of our heroine. Her tale does not deal in wonders, as the gentle reader has already no doubt perceived; and if a journal had been kept of her proceedings during the seven years after the birth of her son, there would be found few incidents more remarkable in it than that of the measles, recorded in the foregoing page. Yes, one day, and greatly to her wonder, the Reverend Mr. Binny, just mentioned, asked her to change her name of Os-

borne for his own; when, with deep blushes, and tears in her eyes and voice, she thanked him for his regard for her, expressed gratitude for his attentions to her and to her poor little boy, but said that she never, never could think of any but—but the husband whom she had lost.

On the twenty-fifth of April, and the eighteenth of June, the days of marriage and widowhood, she kept her room entirely, consecrating them (and we do not know how many hours of solitary night-thought, her little boy sleeping in his crib by her bed-side) to the memory of that departed friend. During the day she was more active. She had to teach George to read and to write, and a little to draw. She read books, in order that she might tell him stories from them. As his eyes opened, and his mind expanded, under the influence of the outward nature round about him, she taught the child, to the best of her humble power, to acknowledge the Maker of all; and every night and every morning he and she—(in that awful and touching communion which I think must bring a thrill to the heart of every man who witnesses or who remembers it)—the mother and the little boy—prayed to Our Father together, the mother pleading with all her gentle heart, the child lisping after her as she spoke. And each time they prayed to God to bless dear papa, as if he were alive and in the room with them.

To wash and dress this young gentleman—to take him for a run of the mornings, before breakfast, and the retreat of grandpapa for "business"—to make for him the most wonderful and ingenious dresses, for which end the thrifty widow cut up and altered every available little bit of finery which she possessed out of her wardrobe during her marriage—for Mrs. Osborne herself (greatly to her mother's vexation, who preferred fine clothes,

especially since her misfortunes) always wore a black gown, and a straw bonnet with a black ribbon—occupied her many hours of the day. Others she had to spare, at the service of her mother and her old father. She had taken the pains to learn, and used to play cribbage with this gentleman on the nights when he did not go to his club. She sang for him when he was so minded, and it was a good sign, for he invariably fell into a comfortable sleep during the music. She wrote out his numerous memorials, letters, prospectuses, and projects. It was in her hand-writing that most of the old gentleman's former acquaintances were informed that he had become an agent for the Black Diamond and Anti-Cinder Coal Company, and could supply his friends and the public with the best coals at —*s.* per chaldron. All he did was to sign the circulars with his flourish and signature, and direct them in a shaky, clerk-like hand. One of these papers was sent to Major Dobbin, — Regt., care of Messrs. Cox and Greenwood; but the Major being in Madras at the time, had no particular call for coals. He knew, though, the hand which had written the prospectus. Good God! what would he not have given to hold it in his own! A second prospectus came out, informing the Major that J. Sedley and Company, having established agencies at Oporto, Bordeaux, and St. Mary's, were enabled to offer to their friends and the public generally, the finest and most celebrated growths of ports, sherries, and claret wines at reasonable prices, and under extraordinary advantages. Acting upon this hint, Dobbin furiously canvassed the governor, the commander-in-chief, the judges, the regiments, and everybody whom he knew in the Presidency, and sent home to Sedley and Co. orders for wine which perfectly astonished Mr. Sed-

ley and Mr. Clapp, who was the Co. in the business. But no more orders came after that first burst of good fortune, on which poor old Sedley was about to build a house in the City, a regiment of clerks, a dock to himself, and correspondents all over the world. The old gentleman's former taste in wine had gone: the curses of the mess-room assailed Major Dobbin for the vile drinks he had been the means of introducing there; and he bought back a great quantity of the wine, and sold it at public outcry, at an enormous loss to himself. As for Jos, who was by this time promoted to a seat at the Revenue Board at Calcutta, he was wild with rage when the post brought him out a bundle of these Bacchanalian prospectuses, with a private note from his father, telling Jos that his senior counted upon him in this enterprise, and had consigned a quantity of select wines to him, as per invoice, drawing bills upon him for the amount of the same. Jos, who would no more have it supposed that his father, Jos Sedley's father, of the Board of Revenue, was a wine merchant asking for orders, than that he was Jack Ketch, refused the bills with scorn, wrote back contumeliously to the old gentleman, bidding him to mind his own affairs; and the protested paper coming back, Sedley and Co. had to take it up, with the profits which they had made out of the Madras venture, and with a little portion of Emmy's savings.

Besides her pension of fifty pounds a-year, there had been five hundred pounds, as her husband's executor stated, left in the agent's hands at the time of Osborne's demise, which sum, as George's guardian, Dobbin proposed to put out at 8 per cent. in an Indian house of agency. Mr. Sedley, who thought the Major had some roguish intentions of his own about the money, was

strongly against this plan; and he went to the agents to protest personally against the employment of the money in question, when he learned, to his surprise, that there had been no such sum in their hands, that all the late Captain's assets did not amount to a hundred pounds, and that the five hundred pounds in question must be a separate sum, of which Major Dobbin knew the particulars. More than ever convinced that there was some roguery, old Sedley pursued the Major. As his daughter's nearest friend, he demanded with a high hand, a statement of the late Captain's accounts. Dobbin's stammering, blushing, and awkwardness added to the other's convictions that he had a rogue to deal with; and in a majestic tone he told that officer a piece of his mind, as he called it, simply stating his belief that the Major was unlawfully detaining his late son-in-law's money.

Dobbin at this lost all patience, and if his accuser had not been so old and so broken, a quarrel might have ensued between them at the Slaughters' Coffee-house, in a box of which place of entertainment the gentlemen had their colloquy. "Come up stairs, sir," lisped out the Major. "I insist on your coming up the stairs, and I will show which is the injured party, poor George or I;" and, dragging the old gentleman up to his bed-room, he produced from his desk Osborne's accounts, and a bundle of I O U's which the latter had given, who, to do him justice, was always ready to give an I O U. "He paid his bills in England," Dobbin added, "but he had not a hundred pounds in the world when he fell. I and one or two of his brother-officers made up the little sum, which was all that we could spare, and you dare tell us that we are trying to cheat the widow and the orphan." Sedley was very contrite and humbled, though the fact

is, that William Dobbin had told a great falsehood to the old gentleman; having himself given every shilling of the money, having buried his friend, and paid all the fees and charges incident upon the calamity and removal of poor Amelia.

About these expenses old Osborne had never given himself any trouble to think, nor any other relative of Amelia, nor Amelia herself, indeed. She trusted to Major Dobbin as an accountant, took his somewhat confused calculations for granted: and never once suspected how much she was in his debt.

Twice or thrice in the year, according to her promise, she wrote him letters to Madras, letters all about little Georgy. How he treasured these papers! Whenever Amelia wrote he answered, and not until then. But he sent over endless remembrances of himself to his godson and to her. He ordered and sent a box of scarfs, and a grand ivory set of chess-men from China. The pawns were little green and white men, with real swords and shields; the knights were on horseback, the castles were on the backs of elephants. "Mrs. Mango's own set at the Pineries was not so fine," Mr. Pestler remarked. These chess-men were the delight of Georgy's life, who printed his first letter in acknowledgment of this gift of his godpapa. He sent over preserves and pickles, which latter the young gentleman tried surreptitiously in the sideboard, and half-killed himself with eating. He thought it was a judgment upon him for stealing, they were so hot. Emmy wrote a comical little account of this mishap to the Major: it pleased him to think that her spirits were rallying, and that she could be merry sometimes now. He sent over a pair of shawls, a white one for her, and a black one with palm-leaves for her

mother, and a pair of red scarfs, as winter wrappers, for old Mr. Sedley and George. The shawls were worth fifty guineas apiece at the very least, as Mrs. Sedley knew. She wore hers in state at church at Brompton, and was congratulated by her female friends upon the splendid acquisition. Emmy's, too, became prettily her modest black gown. "What a pity it is she won't think of him," Mrs. Sedley remarked to Mrs. Clapp, and to all her friends of Brompton. "Jos never sent us such presents, I am sure, and grudges us everything. It is evident that the Major is over head and ears in love with her: and yet, whenever I so much as hint it, she turns red and begins to cry, and goes and sits up stairs with her miniature. I'm sick of that miniature. I wish we had never seen those odious purse-proud Osbornes."

Amidst such humble scenes and associates George's early youth was passed, and the boy grew up delicate, sensitive, imperious, woman-bred—domineering the gentle mother whom he loved with passionate affection. He ruled all the rest of the little world round about him. As he grew, the elders were amazed at his haughty manner and his constant likeness to his father. He asked questions about everything, as inquiring youth will do. The profundity of his remarks and interrogatories astonished his old grandfather, who perfectly bored the club at the tavern with stories about the little lad's learning and genius. He suffered his grandmother with a good-humoured indifference. The small circle round about him believed that the equal of the boy did not exist upon the earth. Georgy inherited his father's pride, and perhaps thought they were not wrong.

When he grew to be about six years old, Dobbin began to write to him very much. The Major wanted to

hear that Georgy was going to a school, and hoped he would acquit himself with credit there: or would he have a good tutor at home? it was time that he should begin to learn; and his godfather and guardian hinted that he hoped to be allowed to defray the charges of the boy's education, which would fall heavily upon his mother's straitened income. The Major, in a word, was always thinking about Amelia and her little boy, and by orders to his agents kept the latter provided with picture-books, paint-boxes, desks, and all conceivable implements of amusement and instruction. Three days before George's sixth birth-day a gentleman in a gig, accompanied by a servant, drove up to Mr. Sedley's house, and asked to see Master George Osborne: it was Mr. Woolsey, military tailor, of Conduit Street, who came at the Major's order to measure the young gentleman for a suit of clothes. He had had the honour of making for the Captain, the young gentleman's father.

Sometimes, too, and by the Major's desire no doubt, his sisters, the Misses Dobbin, would call in the family carriage to take Amelia and the little boy a drive if they were so inclined. The patronage and kindness of these ladies was very uncomfortable to Amelia, but she bore it meekly enough, for her nature was to yield; and, besides, the carriage and its splendours gave little Georgy immense pleasure. The ladies begged occasionally that the child might pass a day with them, and he was always glad to go to that fine garden-house at Denmark Hill, where they lived, and where there were such fine grapes in the hot-houses and peaches on the walls.

One day they kindly came over to Amelia with news which they were *sure* would delight her—something *very* interesting about their dear William.

"What was it: was he coming home?" she asked with pleasure beaming in her eyes.

"Oh, no—not the least—but they had very good reason to believe that dear William was about to be married—and to a relation of a very dear friend of Amelia's—to Miss Glorvina O'Dowd, Sir Michael O'Dowd's sister, who had gone out to join Lady O'Dowd at Madras—a very beautiful and accomplished girl, everybody said."

Amelia said "Oh!" Amelia was very *very* happy indeed. But she supposed Glorvina could not be like her old acquaintance, who was most kind—but—but she was very happy indeed. And by some impulse, of which I cannot explain the meaning, she took George in her arms and kissed him with an extraordinary tenderness. Her eyes were quite moist when she put the child down: and she scarcely spoke a word during the whole of the drive—though she was so very happy indeed.

CHAPTER XXXIX

A CYNICAL CHAPTER

UR duty now takes us back for a brief space to some old Hampshire acquaintances of ours, whose hopes respecting the disposal of their rich kinswoman's property were so woefully disappointed. After counting upon thirty thousand pounds from his sister, it was a heavy blow to Bute Crawley to receive but five; out of which sum, when he had paid his own debts and those of Jim, his son at college, a very small fragment remained to portion off his four plain daughters. Mrs. Bute never knew, or at least never acknowledged, how far her own tyrannous behaviour had tended to ruin her husband. All that woman could do, she vowed and protested she had done. Was it her fault if she did not possess those sycophantic arts which her hypocritical nephew, Pitt Crawley, practised? She wished him all the happiness which he merited out of his ill-gotten gains. "At least the money will remain in the family," she said, charitably. "Pitt will never spend it, my dear, that is quite certain; for a greater miser does not exist in England, and he is as odious, though in a different way, as his spendthrift brother, the abandoned Rawdon."

So Mrs. Bute, after the first shock of rage and disappointment, began to accommodate herself as best she

could to her altered fortunes, and to save and retrench with all her might. She instructed her daughters how to bear poverty cheerfully, and invented a thousand notable methods to conceal or evade it. She took them about to balls and public places in the neighbourhood, with praiseworthy energy: nay, she entertained her friends in a hospitable comfortable manner at the Rectory, and much more frequently than before dear Miss Crawley's legacy had fallen in. From her outward bearing nobody would have supposed that the family had been disappointed in their expectations: or have guessed from her frequent appearance in public how she pinched and starved at home. Her girls had more milliners' furniture than they had ever enjoyed before. They appeared perseveringly at the Winchester and Southampton assemblies; they penetrated to Cowes for the race-balls and regatta-gaieties there; and their carriage, with the horses taken from the plough, was at work perpetually, until it began almost to be believed that the four sisters had had fortunes left them by their aunt, whose name the family never mentioned in public but with the most tender gratitude and regard. I know no sort of lying which is more frequent in Vanity Fair than this; and it may be remarked how people who practise it take credit to themselves for their hypocrisy, and fancy that they are exceedingly virtuous and praiseworthy, because they are able to deceive the world with regard to the extent of their means.

Mrs. Bute certainly thought herself one of the most virtuous women in England, and the sight of her happy family was an edifying one to strangers. They were so cheerful, so loving, so well-educated, so simple! Martha painted flowers exquisitely, and furnished half

the charity-bazaars in the county. Emma was a regular County Bulbul, and her verses in the "Hampshire Telegraph" were the glory of its Poet's Corner. Fanny and Matilda sang duets together, mamma playing the piano, and the other two sisters sitting with their arms round each other's waists, and listening affectionately. Nobody saw the poor girls drumming at the duets in private. No one saw mamma drilling them rigidly hour after hour. In a word, Mrs. Bute put a good face against fortune, and kept up appearances in the most virtuous manner.

Everything that a good and respectable mother could do Mrs. Bute did. She got over yachting men from Southampton, parsons from the Cathedral Close at Winchester, and officers from the barracks there. She tried to inveigle the young barristers at assizes, and encouraged Jim to bring home friends with whom he went out hunting with the H. H. What will not a mother do for the benefit of her beloved ones?

Between such a woman and her brother-in-law, the odious Baronet at the Hall, it is manifest that there could be very little in common. The rupture between Bute and his brother Sir Pitt was complete; indeed, between Sir Pitt and the whole county, to which the old man was a scandal. His dislike for respectable society increased with age, and the lodge-gates had not opened to a gentleman's carriage-wheels since Pitt and Lady Jane came to pay their visit of duty after their marriage.

That was an awful and unfortunate visit, never to be thought of by the family without horror. Pitt begged his wife, with a ghastly countenance, never to speak of it; and it was only through Mrs. Bute herself, who still knew everything which took place at the Hall, that the

circumstances of Sir Pitt's reception of his son and daughter-in-law were ever known at all.

As they drove up the avenue of the park in their neat and well-appointed carriage, Pitt remarked with dismay and wrath great gaps among the trees—his trees,—which the old Baronet was felling entirely without license. The park wore an aspect of utter dreariness and ruin. The drives were ill kept, and the neat carriage splashed and floundered in muddy pools along the road. The great sweep in front of the terrace and entrance stair was black and covered with mosses; the once trim flower-beds rank and weedy. Shutters were up along almost the whole line of the house; the great hall-door was unbarred after much ringing of the bell; an individual in ribbons was seen flitting up the black oak stair, as Horrocks at length admitted the heir of Queen's Crawley and his bride into the halls of their fathers. He led the way into Sir Pitt's "Library," as it was called, the fumes of tobacco growing stronger as Pitt and Lady Jane approached that apartment. "Sir Pitt ain't very well," Horrocks remarked apologetically, and hinted that his master was afflicted with lumbago.

The library looked out on the front walk and park. Sir Pitt had opened one of the windows, and was bawling out thence to the postilion and Pitt's servant, who seemed to be about to take the baggage down.

"Don't move none of them trunks," he cried, pointing with a pipe which he held in his hand. "It's only a morning visit, Tucker, you fool. Lor, what cracks that off hoss has in his heels! Ain't there no one at the King's Head to rub 'em a little? How do, Pitt? How do, my dear? Come to see the old man, hey? 'Gad—you've a pretty face, too. You ain't like that old horse-god-

mother, your mother. Come and give old Pitt a kiss, like a good little gal."

The embrace disconcerted the daughter-in-law somewhat, as the caresses of the old gentleman, unshorn and perfumed with tobacco, might well do. But she remembered that her brother Southdown had moustachios, and smoked cigars, and submitted to the Baronet with a tolerable grace.

"Pitt has got vat," said the Baronet, after this mark of affection. "Does he read ee very long zermons, my dear? Hundredth Psalm, Evening Hymn, hey, Pitt? Go and get a glass of Malmsey and a cake for my Lady Jane, Horrocks, you great big booby, and don't stand stearing there like a fat pig. I won't ask you to stop, my dear; you'll find it too stoopid, and so should I too along a Pitt. I'm an old man now, and like my own ways, and my pipe and backgammon of a night."

"I can play at backgammon, sir," said Lady Jane, laughing. "I used to play with Papa and Miss Crawley, didn't I, Mr. Crawley?"

"Lady Jane can play, sir, at the game to which you state that you are so partial," Pitt said, haughtily.

"But she wawn't stop for all that. Naw, naw, goo back to Mudbury and give Mrs. Rincer a benefit: or drive down to the Rectory, and ask Buty for a dinner. He'll be charmed to see you, you know; he's so much obliged to you for gittin' the old woman's money. Ha ha! Some of it will do to patch up the Hall when I'm gone."

"I perceive, sir," said Pitt, with a heightened voice, "that your people will cut down the timber."

"Yees, yees, very fine weather, and seasonable for the time of year," Sir Pitt answered, who had suddenly

grown deaf. "But I'm gittin' old, Pitt, now. Law bless you, you ain't far from fifty yourself. But he wears well, my pretty Lady Jane, don't he? It's all godliness, sobriety, and a moral life. Look at me, I'm not very fur from fowr-score—he, he;" and he laughed, and took snuff, and leered at her and pinched her hand.

Pitt once more brought the conversation back to the timber: but the Baronet was deaf again in an instant.

"I'm gittin' very old, and have been cruel bad this year with the lumbago. I shan't be here now for long; but I'm glad ee've come, daughter-in-law. I like your face, Lady Jane: it's got none of the damned high-boned Binkie look in it; and I'll give ee something pretty, my dear, to go to Court in." And he shuffled across the room to a cupboard, from which he took a little old case containing jewels of some value. "Take that," said he, "my dear; it belonged to my mother, and afterwards to the first Lady Crawley. Pretty pearls—never gave 'em the ironmonger's daughter. No, no. Take 'em and put 'em up quick," said he, thrusting the case into his daughter's hand, and clapping the door of the cabinet to, as Horrocks entered with a salver and refreshments.

"What have you a been and given Pitt's wife?" said the individual in ribbons, when Pitt and Lady Jane had taken leave of the old gentleman. It was Miss Horrocks, the butler's daughter—the cause of the scandal throughout the county,—the lady who reigned now almost supreme at Queen's Crawley.

The rise and progress of those Ribbons had been marked with dismay by the county and family. The Ribbons opened an account at the Mudbury Branch Savings Bank; the Ribbons drove to Church, monopo-

lising the pony-chaise, which was for the use of the servants at the Hall. The domestics were dismissed at her pleasure. The Scotch gardener, who still lingered on the premises, taking a pride in his walls and hothouses, and indeed making a pretty good livelihood by the garden, which he farmed, and of which he sold the produce at Southampton, found the Ribbons eating peaches on a sunshiny morning at the south-wall, and had his ears boxed when he remonstrated about this attack on his property. He and his Scotch wife and his Scotch children, the only respectable inhabitants of Queen's Crawley, were forced to migrate, with their goods and their chattels, and left the stately comfortable gardens to go to waste, and the flower-beds to run to seed. Poor Lady Crawley's rose-garden became the dreariest wilderness. Only two or three domestics shuddered in the bleak old servants' hall. The stables and offices were vacant, and shut up, and half ruined. Sir Pitt lived in private, and boozed nightly with Horrocks, his butler or housesteward (as he now began to be called), and the abandoned Ribbons. The times were very much changed since the period when she drove to Mudbury in the spring-cart, and called the small tradesmen "Sir." It may have been shame, or it may have been dislike of his neighbours, but the old Cynic of Queen's Crawley hardly issued from his park-gates at all now. He quarrelled with his agents, and screwed his tenants by letter. His days were passed in conducting his own correspondence; the lawyers and farm-bailiffs who had to do business with him, could not reach him but through the Ribbons, who received them at the door of the housekeeper's room, which commanded the back entrance by which they were admitted; and so the Baronet's daily

perplexities increased, and his embarrassments multiplied round him.

The horror of Pitt Crawley may be imagined, as these reports of his father's dotage reached the most exemplary and correct of gentlemen. He trembled daily lest he should hear that the Ribbons was proclaimed his second legal mother-in-law. After that first and last visit, his father's name was never mentioned in Pitt's polite and genteel establishment. It was the skeleton in his house, and all the family walked by it in terror and silence. The Countess Southdown kept on dropping per coach at the lodge-gate the most exciting tracts, tracts which ought to frighten the hair off your head. Mrs. Bute at the parsonage nightly looked out to see if the sky was red over the elms behind which the Hall stood, and the mansion was on fire. Sir G. Wapshot and Sir H. Fuddleston, old friends of the house, wouldn't sit on the bench with Sir Pitt at Quarter Sessions, and cut him dead in the High-street of Southampton, where the reprobate stood offering his dirty old hands to them. Nothing had any effect upon him; he put his hands into his pockets, and burst out laughing, as he scrambled into his carriage and four; he used to burst out laughing at Lady Southdown's tracts: and he laughed at his sons, and at the world, and at the Ribbons when she was angry, which was not seldom.

Miss Horrocks was installed as housekeeper at Queen's Crawley, and ruled all the domestics there with great majesty and rigour. All the servants were instructed to address her as "Mum," or "Madam"—and there was one little maid, on her promotion, who persisted in calling her "My Lady," without any rebuke on the part of the housekeeper. "There has been better

ladies, and there has been worser, Hester," was Miss Horrocks' reply to this compliment of her inferior: so she ruled, having supreme power over all except her father, whom, however, she treated with considerable haughtiness, warning him not to be too familiar in his behaviour to one " as was to be a Baronet's lady." Indeed, she rehearsed that exalted part in life with great satisfaction to herself, and to the amusement of old Sir Pitt, who chuckled at her airs and graces, and would laugh by the hour together at her assumptions of dignity and imitations of genteel life. He swore it was as good as a play to see her in the character of a fine dame, and he made her put on one of the first Lady Crawley's court-dresses, swearing (entirely to Miss Horrocks' own concurrence,) that the dress became her prodigiously, and threatening to drive her off that very instant to Court in a coach-and-four. She had the ransacking of the wardrobes of the two defunct ladies, and cut and hacked their posthumous finery so as to suit her own tastes and figure. And she would have liked to take possession of their jewels and trinkets too; but the old Baronet had locked them away in his private cabinet, nor could she coax or wheedle him out of the keys. And it is a fact, that some time after she left Queen's Crawley a copy-book belonging to this lady was discovered, which showed that she had taken great pains in private to learn the art of writing in general, and especially of writing her own name as Lady Crawley, Lady Betsy Horrocks, Lady Elizabeth Crawley, &c.

Though the good people of the Parsonage never went to the Hall, and shunned the horrid old dotard its owner, yet they kept a strict knowledge of all that happened there, and were looking out every day for the catastrophe

for which Miss Horrocks was also eager. But Fate intervened enviously, and prevented her from receiving the reward due to such immaculate love and virtue.

One day the Baronet surprised "her ladyship," as he

jocularly called her, seated at that old and tuneless piano in the drawing-room, which had scarcely been touched since Becky Sharp played quadrilles upon it—seated at the piano with the utmost gravity, and squalling to the best of her power in imitation of the music which she had sometimes heard. The little kitchen-maid on her promotion was standing at her mistress's side, quite

delighted during the operation, and wagging her head up and down, and crying, "Lor, Mum, 'tis bittiful,"—just like a genteel sycophant in a real drawing-room.

This incident made the old Baronet roar with laughter, as usual. He narrated the circumstance a dozen times to Horrocks in the course of the evening, and greatly to the discomfiture of Miss Horrocks. He thrummed on the table as if it had been a musical instrument, and squalled in imitation of her manner of singing. He vowed that such a beautiful voice ought to be cultivated, and declared she ought to have singing-masters, in which proposals she saw nothing ridiculous. He was in great spirits that night; and drank with his friend and butler an extraordinary quantity of rum-and-water—at a very late hour the faithful friend and domestic conducted his master to his bed-room.

Half an hour afterwards there was a great hurry and bustle in the house. Lights went about from window to window in the lonely desolate old Hall, whereof but two or three rooms were ordinarily occupied by its owner. Presently, a boy on a pony went galloping off to Mudbury, to the Doctor's house there. And in another hour (by which fact we ascertain how carefully the excellent Mrs. Bute Crawley had always kept up an understanding with the great house), that lady in her clogs and calash, the Reverend Bute Crawley, and James Crawley, her son, had walked over from the Rectory through the park, and had entered the mansion by the open hall-door.

They passed through the hall and the small oak parlour, on the table of which stood the three tumblers and

the empty rum-bottle which had served for Sir Pitt's carouse, and through that apartment into Sir Pitt's study, where they found Miss Horrocks, of the guilty ribbons, with a wild air, trying at the presses and escritoires with a bunch of keys. She dropped them with a scream of terror, as little Mrs. Bute's eyes flashed out at her from under her black calash.

"Look at that, James and Mr. Crawley," cried Mrs. Bute, pointing at the scared figure of the black-eyed, guilty wench.

"He gave 'em me; he gave 'em me!" she cried.

"Gave them you, you abandoned creature!" screamed Mrs. Bute. "Bear witness, Mr. Crawley, we found this good-for-nothing woman in the act of stealing your brother's property; and she will be hanged, as I always said she would."

Betsy Horrocks, quite daunted, flung herself down on her knees, bursting into tears. But those who know a really good woman are aware that she is not in a hurry to forgive, and that the humiliation of an enemy is a triumph to her soul.

"Ring the bell, James," Mrs. Bute said. "Go on ringing it till the people come." The three or four domestics resident in the deserted old house came presently at that jangling and continued summons.

"Put that woman in the strong-room," she said. "We caught her in the act of robbing Sir Pitt. Mr. Crawley, you'll make out her committal—and, Beddoes, you'll drive her over in the spring-cart, in the morning, to Southampton Gaol."

"My dear," interposed the Magistrate and Rector—"she's only—"

"Are there no handcuffs?" Mrs. Bute continued,

The Ribbons discovered
in the fact

stamping in her clogs. "There used to be handcuffs. Where's the creature's abominable father?"

"He *did* give 'em me," still cried poor Betsy; "didn't he, Hester? You saw Sir Pitt—you know you did—give 'em me, ever so long ago—the day after Mudbury fair: not that I want 'em. Take 'em if you think they ain't mine." And here the unhappy wretch pulled out from her pocket a large pair of paste shoe-buckles which had excited her admiration, and which she had just appropriated out of one of the bookcases in the study, where they had lain.

"Law, Betsy, how could you go for to tell such a wicked story!" said Hester, the little kitchen-maid late on her promotion—"and to Madame Crawley, so good and kind, and his Rev'rince (with a curtsey) and you may search all *my* boxes, Mum, I'm sure, and here's my keys as I'm an honest girl though of pore parents and workhouse bred—and if you find so much as a beggarly bit of lace or a silk stocking out of all the gownds as *you've* had the picking of may I never go to church agin."

"Give up your keys, you hardened hussy," hissed out the virtuous little lady in the calash.

"And here's a candle, Mum, and if you please, Mum, I can show you her room, Mum, and the press in the housekeeper's room, Mum, where she keeps heaps and heaps of things, Mum," cried out the eager little Hester with a profusion of curtseys.

"Hold your tongue, if you please. I know the room which the creature occupies perfectly well. Mrs. Brown, have the goodness to come with me, and, Beddoes, don't you lose sight of that woman," said Mrs. Bute, seizing the candle.—"Mr. Crawley, you had better go up stairs,

and see that they are not murdering your unfortunate brother"—and the calash, escorted by Mrs. Brown, walked away to the apartment which, as she said truly, she knew perfectly well.

Bute went up stairs, and found the Doctor from Mudbury, with the frightened Horrocks over his master in a chair. They were trying to bleed Sir Pitt Crawley.

With the early morning an express was sent off to Mr. Pitt Crawley by the Rector's lady, who assumed the command of everything, and had watched the old Baronet through the night. He had been brought back to a sort of life; he could not speak, but seemed to recognise people. Mrs. Bute kept resolutely by his bedside. She never seemed to want to sleep, that little woman, and did not close her fiery black eyes once, though the Doctor snored in the arm-chair. Horrocks made some wild efforts to assert his authority and assist his master: but Mrs. Bute called him a tipsy old wretch, and bade him never show his face again in that house, or he should be transported like his abominable daughter.

Terrified by her manner, he slunk down to the oak parlour where Mr. James was, who, having tried the bottle standing there and found no liquor in it, ordered Mr. Horrocks to get another bottle of rum, which he fetched, with clean glasses, and to which the Rector and his son sat down: ordering Horrocks to put down the keys at that instant and never to show his face again.

Cowed by this behaviour, Horrocks gave up the keys: and he and his daughter slunk off silently through the night, and gave up possession of the house of Queen's Crawley.

CHAPTER XL

IN WHICH BECKY IS RECOGNISED BY THE FAMILY

THE heir of Crawley arrived at home, in due time, after this catastrophe, and henceforth may be said to have reigned in Queen's Crawley. For though the old Baronet survived many months, he never recovered the use of his intellect or his speech completely, and the government of the estate devolved upon his elder son. In a strange condition Pitt found it. Sir Pitt was always buying and mortgaging; he had twenty men of business, and quarrels with each; quarrels with all his tenants, and lawsuits with them; lawsuits with the lawyers; lawsuits with the Mining and Dock Companies in which he was proprietor; and with every person with whom he had business. To unravel these difficulties, and to set the estate clear, was a task worthy of the orderly and persevering diplomatist of Pumpernickel: and he set himself to work with prodigious assiduity. His whole family, of course, was transported to Queen's Crawley, whither Lady Southdown, of course, came too; and she set about converting the parish under the Rec-

tor's nose, and brought down her irregular clergy to the dismay of the angry Mrs. Bute. Sir Pitt had concluded no bargain for the sale of the living of Queen's Crawley; when it should drop, her Ladyship proposed to take the patronage into her own hands, and present a young protégé to the Rectory; on which subject the diplomatic Pitt said nothing.

Mrs. Bute's intentions with regard to Miss Betsy Horrocks were not carried into effect: and she paid no visit to Southampton Gaol. She and her father left the Hall, when the latter took possession of the Crawley Arms in the village, of which he had got a lease from Sir Pitt. The ex-butler had obtained a small freehold there likewise, which gave him a vote for the borough. The Rector had another of these votes, and these and four others formed the representative body which returned the two members for Queen's Crawley.

There was a show of courtesy kept up between the Rectory and the Hall ladies, between the younger ones at least, for Mrs. Bute and Lady Southdown never could meet without battles, and gradually ceased seeing each other. Her Ladyship kept her room when the ladies from the Rectory visited their cousins at the Hall. Perhaps Mr. Pitt was not very much displeased at these occasional absences of his mamma-in-law. He believed the Binkie family to be the greatest and wisest, and most interesting in the world, and her Ladyship and his aunt had long held ascendency over him; but sometimes he felt that she commanded him too much. To be considered young was complimentary doubtless; but at six-and-forty to be treated as a boy was sometimes mortifying. Lady Jane yielded up everything, however, to her mother. She was only fond of her children in private;

and it was lucky for her that Lady Southdown's multifarious business, her conferences with ministers, and her correspondence with all the missionaries of Africa, Asia, and Australasia, &c., occupied the venerable Countess a great deal, so that she had but little time to devote to her granddaughter, the little Matilda, and her grandson, Master Pitt Crawley. The latter was a feeble child: and it was only by prodigious quantities of calomel that Lady Southdown was able to keep him in life at all.

As for Sir Pitt he retired into those very apartments where Lady Crawley had been previously extinguished, and here was tended by Miss Hester, the girl upon her promotion, with constant care and assiduity. What love, what fidelity, what constancy is there equal to that of a nurse with good wages? They smooth pillows: and make arrowroot: they get up at nights: they bear complaints and querulousness: they see the sun shining out of doors and don't want to go abroad: they sleep on armchairs, and eat their meals in solitude: they pass long long evenings doing nothing, watching the embers, and the patient's drink simmering in the jug: they read the weekly paper the whole week through; and Law's Serious Call or the Whole Duty of Man suffices them for literature for the year—and we quarrel with them because, when their relations come to see them once a week, a little gin is smuggled in in their linen basket. Ladies, what man's love is there that would stand a year's nursing of the object of his affection? Whereas a nurse will stand by you for ten pounds a quarter, and we think her too highly paid. At least Mr. Crawley grumbled a good deal about paying half as much to Miss Hester for her constant attendance upon the Baronet his father.

Of sunshiny days this old gentleman was taken out

in a chair on the terrace—the very chair which Miss Crawley had had at Brighton, and which had been transported thence with a number of Lady Southdown's effects to Queen's Crawley. Lady Jane always walked by the old man; and was an evident favourite with him. He used to nod many times to her and smile when she came in, and utter inarticulate deprecatory moans when she was going away. When the door shut upon her he would cry and sob—whereupon Hester's face and manner, which was always exceedingly bland and gentle while her lady was present, would change at once, and she would make faces at him and clench her fist, and scream out "Hold your tongue, you stoopid old fool," and twirl away his chair from the fire which he loved to look at—at which he would cry more. For this was all that was left after more than seventy years of cunning and struggling, and drinking, and scheming, and sin and selfishness—a whimpering old idiot put in and out of bed and cleaned and fed like a baby.

At last a day came when the nurse's occupation was over. Early one morning, as Pitt Crawley was at his steward's and bailiff's books in the study, a knock came to the door, and Hester presented herself dropping a curtsey, and said,

"If you please, Sir Pitt, Sir Pitt died this morning, Sir Pitt. I was a-making of his toast, Sir Pitt, for his gruel, Sir Pitt, which he took every morning regular at six, Sir Pitt, and—I thought I heard a moan-like, Sir Pitt—and—and—and—" She dropped another curtsey.

What was it that made Pitt's pale face flush quite red? Was it because he was Sir Pitt at last, with a seat in Parliament, and perhaps future honours in prospect?

Sir Pitt's last stage

"I'll clear the estate now with the ready money," he thought, and rapidly calculated its incumbrances and the improvements which he would make. He would not use his aunt's money previously lest Sir Pitt should recover, and his outlay be in vain.

All the blinds were pulled down at the Hall and Rectory: the church bell was tolled, and the chancel hung in black; and Bute Crawley didn't go to a coursing meeting, but went and dined quietly at Fuddleston, where they talked about his deceased brother and young Sir Pitt over their port. Miss Betsy, who was by this time married to a saddler at Mudbury, cried a good deal. The family surgeon rode over and paid his respectful compliments, and inquiries for the health of their ladyships. The death was talked about at Mudbury and at the Crawley Arms; the landlord whereof had become reconciled with the Rector of late, who was occasionally known to step into the parlour and taste Mr. Horrocks' mild beer.

"Shall I write to your brother—or will you?" asked Lady Jane of her husband, Sir Pitt.

"I will write, of course," Sir Pitt said, "and invite him to the funeral; it will be but becoming."

"And—and—Mrs. Rawdon," said Lady Jane, timidly.

"Jane!" said Lady Southdown, "how can you think of such a thing?"

"Mrs. Rawdon must of course be asked," said Sir Pitt, resolutely.

"Not whilst *I* am in the house!" said Lady Southdown.

"Your Ladyship will be pleased to recollect that I

am the head of this family," Sir Pitt replied. "If you please, Lady Jane, you will write a letter to Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, requesting her presence upon this melancholy occasion."

"Jane, I forbid you to put pen to paper!" cried the Countess.

"I believe I am the head of this family," Sir Pitt repeated; "and however much I may regret any circumstance which may lead to your Ladyship quitting this house, must, if you please, continue to govern it as I see fit."

Lady Southdown rose up as magnificent as Mrs. Siddons in Lady Macbeth, and ordered that horses might be put to her carriage. If her son and daughter turned her out of their house, she would hide her sorrows somewhere in loneliness, and pray for their conversion to better thoughts.

"We don't turn you out of our house, Mamma," said the timid Lady Jane imploringly.

"You invite such company to it as no Christian lady should meet, and I will have my horses to-morrow morning."

"Have the goodness to write, Jane, under my dictation," said Sir Pitt, rising, and throwing himself into an attitude of command, like the Portrait of a Gentleman in the Exhibition, "and begin. 'Queen's Crawley, September 14, 1822.—My dear brother—'"

Hearing these decisive and terrible words, Lady Macbeth, who had been waiting for a sign of weakness or vacillation on the part of her son-in-law, rose, and with a scared look, left the library. Lady Jane looked up to her husband as if she would fain follow and soothe her mamma: but Pitt forbade his wife to move.

"She won't go away," he said. "She has let her house at Brighton, and has spent her last half-year's dividends. A Countess living at an inn is a ruined woman. I have been waiting long for an opportunity to take this—this decisive step, my love; for, as you must perceive, it is impossible that there should be two chiefs in a family: and now, if you please, we will resume the dictation. 'My dear brother, the melancholy intelligence which it is my duty to convey to my family must have been long anticipated by,'" &c.

In a word, Pitt having come to his kingdom, and having by good luck, or desert rather, as he considered, assumed almost all the fortune which his other relatives had expected, was determined to treat his family kindly and respectably, and make a house of Queen's Crawley once more. It pleased him to think that he should be its chief. He proposed to use the vast influence that his commanding talents and position must speedily acquire for him in the county to get his brother placed and his cousins decently provided for, and perhaps had a little sting of repentance as he thought that he was the proprietor of all that they had hoped for. In the course of three or four days' reign his bearing was changed, and his plans quite fixed: he determined to rule justly and honestly, to depose Lady Southdown, and to be on the friendliest possible terms with all the relations of his blood.

So he dictated a letter to his brother Rawdon—a sollemn and elaborate letter containing the profoundest observations, couched in the longest words, and filling with wonder the simple little secretary, who wrote under her husband's order. "What an orator this will be," thought she, "when he enters the House of Commons" (on

which point, and on the tyranny of Lady Southdown, Pitt had sometimes dropped hints to his wife in bed); "how wise and good, and what a genius my husband is! I fancied him a little cold; but how good, and what a genius!"

The fact is, Pitt Crawley had got every word of the letter by heart, and had studied it, with diplomatic secrecy, deeply and perfectly, long before he thought fit to communicate it to his astonished wife.

This letter, with a huge black border and seal, was accordingly despatched by Sir Pitt Crawley to his brother the Colonel, in London. Rawdon Crawley was but half-pleased at the receipt of it. "What's the use of going down to that stupid place?" thought he. "I can't stand being alone with Pitt after dinner, and horses there and back will cost us twenty pound."

He carried the letter, as he did all difficulties, to Becky, up stairs in her bed-room—with her chocolate, which he always made and took to her of a morning.

He put the tray with the breakfast and the letter on the dressing-table, before which Becky sate combing her yellow hair. She took up the black-edged missive, and having read it, she jumped up from the chair, crying "Hurray!" and waving the note round her head.

"Hurray?" said Rawdon, wondering at the little figure capering about in a streaming flannel dressing-gown, with tawny locks dishevelled. "He's not left us anything, Becky. I had my share when I came of age."

"You'll never be of age, you silly old man," Becky replied. "Run out now to Madam Brunoy's, for I must have some mourning: and get a crape on your hat,

and a black waistcoat—I don't think you've got one; order it to be brought home to-morrow, so that we may be able to start on Thursday."

"You don't mean to go?" Rawdon interposed.

"Of course I mean to go. I mean that Lady Jane shall present me at Court next year. I mean that your brother shall give you a seat in Parliament, you stupid old creature. I mean that Lord Steyne shall have your vote and his, my dear, old, silly man; and that you shall

be an Irish Secretary, or a West Indian Governor: or a Treasurer, or a Consul, or some such thing."

"Posting will cost a dooce of a lot of money," grumbled Rawdon.

"We might take Southdown's carriage, which ought to be present at the funeral, as he is a relation of the family: but, no—I intend that we shall go by the coach. They'll like it better. It seems more humble—"

"Rawdy goes of course?" the Colonel asked.

"No such thing; why pay an extra place? He's too big to travel bodkin between you and me. Let him stay here in the nursery, and Briggs can make him a black frock. Go you: and do as I bid you. And you had best tell Sparks, your man, that old Sir Pitt is dead, and that you will come in for something considerable when the affairs are arranged. He'll tell this to Raggles, who has been pressing for money, and it will console poor Raggles." And so Becky began sipping her chocolate.

When the faithful Lord Steyne arrived in the evening, he found Becky and her companion, who was no other than our friend Briggs, busy cutting, ripping, snipping, and tearing all sorts of black stuffs available for the melancholy occasion.

"Miss Briggs and I are plunged in grief and despondency for the death of our Papa," Rebecca said. "Sir Pitt Crawley is dead, my lord. We have been tearing our hair all the morning, and now we are tearing up our old clothes."

"Oh, Rebecca, how can you—" was all that Briggs could say as she turned up her eyes.

"Oh, Rebecca, how can you—" echoed my Lord. "So that old scoundrel's dead, is he? He might have been a Peer if he had played his cards better. Mr. Pitt

had very nearly made him; but he ratted always at the wrong time. What an old Silenus it was."

"I might have been Silenus's widow," said Rebecca. "Don't you remember, Miss Briggs, how you peeped in at the door, and saw old Sir Pitt on his knees to me?" Miss Briggs, our old friend, blushed very much at this reminiscence; and was glad when Lord Steyne ordered her to go down stairs and make him a cup of tea.

Briggs was the house-dog whom Rebecca had provided as guardian of her innocence and reputation. Miss Crawley had left her a little annuity. She would have been content to remain in the Crawley family with Lady Jane, who was good to her and to everybody; but Lady Southdown dismissed poor Briggs as quickly as decency permitted; and Mr. Pitt (who thought himself much injured by the uncalled-for generosity of his deceased relative towards a lady who had only been Miss Crawley's faithful retainer a score of years) made no objection to that exercise of the dowager's authority. Bowls and Firkin likewise received their legacies, and their dismissals; and married and set up a lodging-house, according to the custom of their kind.

Briggs tried to live with her relations in the country, but found that attempt was vain after the better society to which she had been accustomed. Briggs's friends, small tradesmen in a country town, quarrelled over Miss Briggs's forty pounds a-year, as eagerly and more openly than Miss Crawley's kinsfolk had for that lady's inheritance. Briggs's brother, a radical hatter and grocer, called his sister a purse-proud aristocrat, because she would not advance a part of her capital to stock his shop: and she would have done so most likely, but that

their sister, a dissenting shoemaker's lady, at variance with the hatter and grocer, who went to another chapel, showed how their brother was on the verge of bankruptcy, and took possession of Briggs for a while. The dissenting shoemaker wanted Miss Briggs to send his son to college, and make a gentleman of him. Between them the two families got a great portion of her private savings out of her: and finally she fled to London followed by the anathemas of both, and determined to seek for servitude again as infinitely less onerous than liberty. And advertising in the papers that a " Gentlewoman of agreeable manners, and accustomed to the best society, was anxious to," &c., she took up her residence with Mr. Bowls in Half Moon Street, and waited the result of the advertisement.

So it was that she fell in with Rebecca. Mrs. Rawdon's dashing little carriage and ponies was whirling down the street one day, just as Miss Briggs, fatigued, had reached Mr. Bowls's door, after a weary walk to the *Times* Office in the City, to insert her advertisement for the sixth time. Rebecca was driving, and at once recognised the gentlewoman with agreeable manners, and being a perfectly good-humoured woman, as we have seen, and having a regard for Briggs, she pulled up the ponies at the door-steps, gave the reins to the groom, and jumping out, had hold of both Briggs's hands, before she of the agreeable manners had recovered from the shock of seeing an old friend.

Briggs cried, and Becky laughed a great deal, and kissed the gentlewoman as soon as they got into the passage; and thence into Mrs. Bowls's front parlour, with the red moreen curtains, and the round looking-glass, with the chained eagle above, gazing upon the

back of the ticket in the window which announced "Apartments to Let."

Briggs told all her history amidst those perfectly uncalled-for sobs and ejaculations of wonder with which women of her soft nature salute an old acquaintance, or regard a rencontre in the street; for though people meet other people every day, yet some there are who insist upon discovering miracles; and women, even though they have disliked each other, begin to cry when they meet, deploring and remembering the time when they last quarrelled. So, in a word, Briggs told all her history, and Becky gave a narrative of her own life, with her usual artlessness and candour.

Mrs. Bowls, late Firkin, came and listened grimly in the passage to the hysterical sniffling and giggling which went on in the front parlour. Becky had never been a favourite of hers. Since the establishment of the married couple in London they had frequented their former friends of the house of Raggles, and did not like the latter's account of the Colonel's *ménage*. "*I* wouldn't trust him, Ragg, my boy," Bowls remarked: and his wife, when Mrs. Rawdon issued from the parlour, only saluted the lady with a very sour curtsey; and her fingers were like so many sausages, cold and lifeless, when she held them out in deference to Mrs. Rawdon, who persisted in shaking hands with the retired lady's maid. She whirled away into Piccadilly, nodding with the sweetest of smiles towards Miss Briggs, who hung nodding at the window close under the advertisement-card, and at the next moment was in the Park with a half dozen of dandies cantering after her carriage.

When she found how her friend was situated, and how having a snug legacy from Miss Crawley, salary

was no object to our gentlewoman, Becky instantly formed some benevolent little domestic plans concerning her. This was just such a companion as would suit her establishment, and she invited Briggs to come to dinner with her that very evening, when she should see Becky's dear little darling Rawdon.

Mrs. Bowls cautioned her lodger against venturing into the lion's den, "wherein you will rue it, Miss B., mark my words, and as sure as my name is Bowls." And Briggs promised to be very cautious. The upshot of which caution was that she went to live with Mrs. Rawdon the next week, and had lent Rawdon Crawley six hundred pounds upon annuity before six months were over.

CHAPTER XLI

IN WHICH BECKY REVISITS THE HALLS OF HER ANCESTORS

So the morning being ready, and Sir Pitt Crawley warned of their arrival, Colonel Crawley and his wife took a couple of places in the same old Highflyer coach, by which Rebecca had travelled in the defunct Baronet's company, on her first journey into the world some nine years before. How well she remembered the Inn Yard, and the ostler to whom she refused money, and the insinuating Cambridge lad who wrapped her in his coat on the journey! Rawdon took his place outside, and would have liked to drive, but his grief forbade him. He sat by the coachman, and talked about horses and the road the whole way; and who kept the inns, and who horsed the coach by which he had travelled so many a time, when he and Pitt were boys going to Eton. At Mudbury a carriage and a pair of horses received them, with a coachman in black. "It's the old drag, Rawdon," Rebecca said, as they got in. "The worms have eaten the cloth a good deal—there's the stain which Sir Pitt—ha! I see Dawson the Iron-

monger has his shutters up—which Sir Pitt made such a noise about. It was a bottle of cherry brandy he broke which we went to fetch for your aunt from Southampton. How time flies, to be sure! that can't be Polly Talboys, that bouncing girl standing by her mother at the cottage there. I remember her a mangy little urchin picking weeds in the garden."

"Fine gal," said Rawdon, returning the salute which the cottage gave him, by two fingers applied to his crape hat-band. Becky bowed and saluted, and recognised people here and there graciously. These recognitions were inexpressibly pleasant to her. It seemed as if she was not an impostor any more, and was coming to the home of her ancestors. Rawdon was rather abashed, and cast down on the other hand. What recollections of boyhood and innocence might have been flitting across his brain? What pangs of dim remorse and doubt and shame?

"Your sisters must be young women now," Rebecca said, thinking of those girls for the first time perhaps since she had left them.

"Don't know, I'm shaw," replied the Colonel. "Hullo! here's old Mother Lock. How-dy-do, Mrs. Lock? Remember me, don't you? Master Rawdon, hey? Dammy, how those old women last; she was a hundred when I was a boy."

They were going through the lodge-gates kept by old Mrs. Lock, whose hand Rebecca insisted upon shaking, as she flung open the creaking old iron gate, and the carriage passed between the two moss-grown pillars surmounted by the dove and serpent.

"The governor has cut into the timber," Rawdon said, looking about, and then was silent—so was Becky.

Both of them were rather agitated, and thinking of old times. He about Eton, and his mother, whom he remembered, a frigid demure woman, and a sister who died, of whom he had been passionately fond; and how he used to thrash Pitt; and about little Rawdy at home. And Rebecca thought about her own youth, and the dark secrets of those early tainted days; and of her entrance into life by yonder gates; and of Miss Pinkerton, and Joe, and Amelia.

The gravel walk and terrace had been scraped quite clean. A grand painted hatchment was already over the great entrance, and two very solemn and tall personages in black flung open each a leaf of the door as the carriage pulled up at the familiar steps. Rawdon turned red, and Becky somewhat pale, as they passed through the old hall, arm in arm. She pinched her husband's arm as they entered the oak parlour, where Sir Pitt and his wife were ready to receive them. Sir Pitt in black, Lady Jane in black, and my Lady Southdown with a large black head-piece of bugles and feathers, which waved on her Ladyship's head like an undertaker's tray.

Sir Pitt had judged correctly, that she would not quit the premises. She contented herself by preserving a solemn and stony silence, when in company of Pitt and his rebellious wife, and by frightening the children in the nursery by the ghastly gloom of her demeanour. Only a very faint bending of the head-dress and plumes welcomed Rawdon and his wife, as those prodigals returned to their family.

To say the truth, they were not affected very much one way or other by this coolness. Her Ladyship was a person only of secondary consideration in their minds

just then—they were intent upon the reception which the reigning brother and sister would afford them.

Pitt, with rather a heightened colour, went up and shook his brother by the hand; and saluted Rebecca with a hand-shake and a very low bow. But Lady Jane took both the hands of her sister-in-law and kissed her affectionately. The embrace somehow brought tears into the eyes of the little adventuress—which ornaments, as we know, she wore very seldom. The artless mark of kindness and confidence touched and pleased her; and Rawdon, encouraged by this demonstration on his sister's part, twirled up his moustachios, and took leave to salute Lady Jane with a kiss, which caused her Ladyship to blush exceedingly.

"Dev'lish nice little woman, Lady Jane," was his verdict, when he and his wife were together again. "Pitt's got fat, too, and is doing the thing handsomely." "He can afford it," said Rebecca, and agreed in her husband's farther opinion, "that the mother-in-law was a tremendous old guy—and that the sisters were rather well-looking young women."

They, too, had been summoned from school to attend the funeral ceremonies. It seemed Sir Pitt Crawley, for the dignity of the house and family, had thought right to have about the place as many persons in black as could possibly be assembled. All the men and maids of the house, the old women of the Alms House, whom the elder Sir Pitt had cheated out of a great portion of their due, the Parish Clerk's family, and the special retainers of both Hall and Rectory were habited in sable; added to these, the undertaker's men, at least a score, with crapes and hat-bands, and who made a goodly show when the great burying show took place—but these are

mute personages in our drama; and having nothing to do or say, need occupy a very little space here.

With regard to her sisters-in-law Rebecca did not attempt to forget her former position of Governess towards them, but recalled it frankly and kindly, and asked them about their studies with great gravity, and told them that she had thought of them many and many a day, and longed to know of their welfare. In fact you would have supposed that ever since she had left them she had not ceased to keep them uppermost in her thoughts, and to take the tenderest interest in their welfare. So supposed Lady Crawley herself and her young sisters.

"She's hardly changed since eight years," said Miss Rosalind to Miss Violet, as they were preparing for dinner.

"Those red-haired women look wonderfully well," replied the other.

"Hers is much darker than it was; I think she must dye it," Miss Rosalind added. "She is stouter, too, and altogether improved," continued Miss Rosalind, who was disposed to be very fat.

"At least she gives herself no airs, and remembers that she was our Governess once," Miss Violet said, intimating that it befitted all governesses to keep their proper place, and forgetting altogether that she was granddaughter not only of Sir Walpole Crawley, but of Mr. Dawson of Mudbury, and so had a coal-scuttle in her scutcheon. There are other very well-meaning people whom one meets every day in Vanity Fair, who are surely equally oblivious.

"It can't be true what the girls at the Rectory said, that her mother was an opera-dancer—"

"A person can't help their birth," Rosalind replied with great liberality. "And I agree with our brother, that as she is in the family, of course we are bound to notice her. I am sure Aunt Bute need not talk: she wants to marry Kate to young Hooper, the wine-merchant, and absolutely asked him to come to the Rectory for orders."

"I wonder whether Lady Southdown will go away; she looked very glum upon Mrs. Rawdon," the other said.

"I wish she would. *I* won't read the 'Washerwoman of Finchley Common,'" vowed Violet; and so saying, and avoiding a passage at the end of which a certain coffin was placed with a couple of watchers, and lights perpetually burning in the closed room, these young women came down to the family dinner, for which the bell rang as usual.

But before this, Lady Jane conducted Rebecca to the apartments prepared for her, which, with the rest of the house, had assumed a very much improved appearance of order and comfort during Pitt's regency, and here beholding that Mrs. Rawdon's modest little trunks had arrived, and were placed in the bed-room and dressing-room adjoining, helped her to take off her neat black bonnet and cloak, and asked her sister-in-law in what more she could be useful.

"What I should like best," said Rebecca, "would be to go to the nursery; and see your dear little children." On which the two ladies looked very kindly at each other, and went to that apartment hand in hand.

Becky admired little Matilda, who was not quite four years old, as the most charming little love in the world; and the boy, a little fellow of two years—pale, heavy-

eyed, and large headed, she pronounced to be a perfect prodigy in point of size, intelligence, and beauty.

"I wish Mamma would not insist on giving him so much medicine," Lady Jane said, with a sigh. "I often think we should all be better without it." And then Lady Jane and her new-found friend had one of those confidential medical conversations about the children, which all mothers, and most women, as I am given to understand, delight in. Fifty years ago, and when the present writer, being an interesting little boy, was ordered out of the room with the ladies after dinner, I remember quite well that their talk was chiefly about their ailments; and putting this question directly to two or three since, I have always got from them the acknowledgment that times are not changed. Let my fair readers remark for themselves this very evening when they quit the dessert-table, and assemble to celebrate the drawing-room mysteries. Well—in half-an-hour Becky and Lady Jane were close and intimate friends—and in the course of the evening her Ladyship informed Sir Pitt that she thought her new sister-in-law was a kind, frank, unaffected, and affectionate young woman.

And so having easily won the daughter's good-will, the indefatigable little woman bent herself to conciliate the august Lady Southdown. As soon as she found her Ladyship alone, Rebecca attacked her on the nursery question at once, and said that her own little boy was saved, actually saved, by calomel, freely administered, when all the physicians in Paris had given the dear child up. And then she mentioned how often she had heard of Lady Southdown from that excellent man the Reverend Lawrence Grills, Minister of the chapel in May Fair, which she frequented; and how her views were very

much changed by circumstances and misfortunes; and how she hoped that a past life spent in worldliness and error might not incapacitate her from *more serious*

thought for the future. She described how in former days she had been indebted to Mr. Crawley for religious instruction, touched upon the "Washerwoman of Finchley Common," which she had read with the greatest profit, and asked about Lady Emily, its gifted author, now Lady Emily Hornblower, at Cape Town, where her husband had strong hopes of becoming Bishop of Caffraria.

But she crowned all, and confirmed herself in Lady

Southdown's favour, by feeling very much agitated and unwell after the funeral, and requesting her Ladyship's medical advice, which the Dowager not only gave, but wrapped up in a bed-gown, and looking more like Lady Macbeth than ever, came privately in the night to Becky's room, with a parcel of favourite tracts, and a medicine of her own composition, which she insisted that Mrs. Rawdon should take.

Becky first accepted the tracts, and began to examine them with great interest, engaging the Dowager in a conversation concerning them and the welfare of her soul, by which means she hoped that her body might escape medication. But after the religious topics were exhausted, Lady Macbeth would not quit Becky's chamber until her cup of night-drink was emptied too; and poor Mrs. Rawdon was compelled actually to assume a look of gratitude, and to swallow the medicine under the unyielding old Dowager's nose, who left her victim finally with a benediction.

It did not much comfort Mrs. Rawdon; her countenance was very queer when Rawdon came in and heard what had happened; and his explosions of laughter were as loud as usual, when Becky, with a fun which she could not disguise, even though it was at her own expense, described the occurrence, and how she had been victimised by Lady Southdown. Lord Steyne, and her son in London, had many a laugh over the story, when Rawdon and his wife returned to their quarters in May Fair. Becky acted the whole scene for them. She put on a night-cap and gown. She preached a great sermon in the true serious manner: she lectured on the virtue of the medicine which she pretended to administer, with a gravity of imitation so perfect, that you would have

thought it was the Countess's own Roman nose through which she snuffled. "Give us Lady Southdown and the black dose," was a constant cry amongst the folks in Becky's little drawing-room in May Fair. And for the first time in her life the Dowager Countess of Southdown was made amusing.

Sir Pitt remembered the testimonies of respect and veneration which Rebecca had paid personally to himself in early days, and was tolerably well disposed towards her. The marriage, ill-advised as it was, had improved Rawdon very much—that was clear from the Colonel's altered habits and demeanour—and had it not been a lucky union as regarded Pitt himself? The cunning diplomatist smiled inwardly as he owned that he owed his fortune to it, and acknowledged that he at least ought not to cry out against it. His satisfaction was not removed by Rebecca's own statements, behaviour, and conversation.

She doubled the deference which before had charmed him, calling out his conversational powers in such a manner as quite to surprise Pitt himself, who, always inclined to respect his own talents, admired them the more when Rebecca pointed them out to him. With her sister-in-law, Rebecca was satisfactorily able to prove, that it was Mrs. Bute Crawley who brought about the marriage which she afterwards so calumniated; that it was Mrs. Bute's avarice—who hoped to gain all Miss Crawley's fortune, and deprive Rawdon of his aunt's favour—which caused and invented all the wicked reports against Rebecca. "She succeeded in making us poor," Rebecca said, with an air of angelical patience; "but how can I be angry with a woman who has given me one of the best husbands in the world? And has not her

own avarice been sufficiently punished by the ruin of her own hopes, and the loss of the property by which she set so much store? Poor!" she cried. "Dear Lady Jane, what care we for poverty? I am used to it from childhood, and I am often thankful that Miss Crawley's money has gone to restore the splendour of the noble old family of which I am so proud to be a member. I am sure Sir Pitt will make a much better use of it than Rawdon would."

All these speeches were reported to Sir Pitt by the most faithful of wives, and increased the favourable impression which Rebecca made; so much so, that when on the third day after the funeral the family party were at dinner, Sir Pitt Crawley, carving fowls at the head of the table, actually said to Mrs. Rawdon, "Ahem! *Rebecca,* may I give you a wing?"—a speech which made the little woman's eyes sparkle with pleasure.

While Rebecca was prosecuting the above schemes and hopes, and Pitt Crawley arranging the funeral ceremonial and other matters connected with his future progress and dignity, and Lady Jane busy with her nursery, as far as her mother would let her, and the sun rising and setting, and the clock-tower bell of the Hall ringing to dinner and to prayers as usual, the body of the late owner of Queen's Crawley lay in the apartment which he had occupied, watched unceasingly by the professional attendants who were engaged for that rite. A woman or two, and three or four undertaker's men, the best whom Southampton could furnish, dressed in black, and of a proper stealthy and tragical demeanour, had charge of the remains which they watched turn about, having the housekeeper's room for their place of ren-

dezvous when off duty, where they played at cards in privacy and drank their beer.

The members of the family and servants of the house kept away from the gloomy spot, where the bones of the descendant of an ancient line of knights and gentlemen lay, awaiting their final consignment to the family crypt. No regrets attended them, save those of the poor woman who had hoped to be Sir Pitt's wife and widow, and who had fled in disgrace from the Hall over which she had so nearly been a ruler. Beyond her and a favourite old pointer he had, and between whom and himself an attachment subsisted during the period of his imbecility, the old man had not a single friend to mourn him, having indeed, during the whole course of his life, never taken the least pains to secure one. Could the best and kindest of us who depart from the earth, have an opportunity of revisiting it, I suppose he or she (assuming that any Vanity Fair feelings subsist in the sphere whither we are bound) would have a pang of mortification at finding how soon our survivors were consoled. And so Sir Pitt was forgotten—like the kindest and best of us—only a few weeks sooner.

Those who will may follow his remains to the grave, whither they were borne on the appointed day, in the most becoming manner, the family in black coaches, with their handkerchiefs up to their noses, ready for the tears which did not come: the undertaker and his gentlemen in deep tribulation: the select tenantry mourning out of compliment to the new landlord: the neighbouring gentry's carriages at three miles an hour, empty, and in profound affliction: the parson speaking out the formula about "our dear brother departed." As long as we have a man's body, we play our Vanities upon it,

surrounding it with humbug and ceremonies, laying it in state, and packing it up in gilt nails and velvet: and we finish our duty by placing over it a stone, written all over with lies. Bute's curate, a smart young fellow from Oxford, and Sir Pitt Crawley, composed between them an appropriate Latin epitaph for the late lamented Baronet: and the former preached a classical sermon, exhorting the survivors not to give way to grief, and informing them in the most respectful terms that they also would be one day called upon to pass that gloomy and mysterious portal which had just closed upon the remains of their lamented brother. Then the tenantry mounted on horseback again, or stayed and refreshed themselves at the Crawley Arms. Then, after a lunch in the servants' hall at Queen's Crawley, the gentry's carriages wheeled off to their different destinations: then the undertaker's men, taking the ropes, palls, velvets, ostrich feathers, and other mortuary properties, clambered up on the roof of the hearse, and rode off to Southampton. Their faces relapsed into a natural expression as the horses, clearing the lodge-gates, got into a brisker trot on the open road; and squads of them might have been seen, speckling with black the public-house entrances, with pewter-pots flashing in the sunshine. Sir Pitt's invalid-chair was wheeled away into a tool-house in the garden: the old pointer used to howl sometimes at first, but these were the only accents of grief which were heard in the Hall of which Sir Pitt Crawley, Baronet, had been master for some three-score years.

As the birds were pretty plentiful, and partridge-shooting is as it were the duty of an English gentleman

of statesman-like propensities, Sir Pitt Crawley, the first shock of grief over, went out a little and partook of that diversion in a white hat with crape round it. The sight of those fields of stubble and turnips, now his own, gave him many secret joys. Sometimes, and with an exquisite humility, he took no gun, but went out with a peaceful bamboo cane; Rawdon, his big brother, and the keepers blazing away at his side. Pitt's money and acres had a great effect upon his brother. The penniless Colonel became quite obsequious and respectful to the head of his house, and despised the milk-sop Pitt no longer. Rawdon listened with sympathy to his senior's prospects of planting and draining: gave his advice about the stables and cattle, rode over to Mudbury to look at a mare which he thought would carry Lady Jane, and offered to break her, &c.: the rebellious dragoon was quite humbled and subdued, and became a most creditable younger brother. He had constant bulletins from Miss Briggs in London respecting little Rawdon, who was left behind there: who sent messages of his own. "I am very well," he wrote. "I hope you are very well. I hope Mamma is very well. The pony is very well. Grey takes me to ride in the Park. I can canter. I met the little boy who rode before. He cried when he cantered. I do not cry." Rawdon read these letters to his brother, and Lady Jane, who was delighted with them. The Baronet promised to take charge of the lad at school; and his kind-hearted wife gave Rebecca a banknote, begging her to buy a present with it for her little nephew.

One day followed another, and the ladies of the house passed their life in those calm pursuits and amusements which satisfy country ladies. Bells rang to meals, and

to prayers. The young ladies took exercise on the piano-forte every morning after breakfast, Rebecca giving them the benefit of her instruction. Then they put on thick shoes and walked in the park or shrubberies, or beyond the palings into the village, descending upon the cottages, with Lady Southdown's medicine and tracts for the sick people there. Lady Southdown drove out in a pony-chaise, when Rebecca would take her place by the Dowager's side, and listen to her solemn talk with the utmost interest. She sang Handel and Haydn to the family of evenings, and engaged in a large piece of worsted work, as if she had been born to the business, and as if this kind of life was to continue with her until she should sink to the grave in a polite old age, leaving regrets and a great quantity of consols behind her—as if there were not cares and duns, schemes, shifts, and poverty, waiting outside the Park gates, to pounce upon her when she issued into the world again.

"It isn't difficult to be a country gentleman's wife," Rebecca thought. "I think I could be a good woman if I had five thousand a year. I could dawdle about in the nursery, and count the apricots on the wall. I could water plants in a green-house, and pick off dead leaves from the geraniums. I could ask old women about their rheumatisms, and order half-a-crown's worth of soup for the poor. I shouldn't miss it much, out of five thousand a year. I could even drive out ten miles to dine at a neighbour's, and dress in the fashions of the year before last. I could go to church and keep awake in the great family pew: or go to sleep behind the curtains, with my veil down, if I only had practice. I could pay everybody, if I had but the money. This is what the conjurors here pride themselves upon doing. They look

down with pity upon us miserable sinners who have none. They think themselves generous if they give our children a five-pound note, and us contemptible if we are without one." And who knows but Rebecca was right in her speculations—and that it was only a question of money and fortune which made the difference between her and an honest woman? If you take temptations into account, who is to say that he is better than his neighbour? A comfortable career of prosperity, if it does not make people honest, at least keeps them so. An alderman coming from a turtle feast will not step out of his carriage to steal a leg of mutton; but put him to starve, and see if he will not purloin a loaf. Becky consoled herself by so balancing the chances and equalising the distribution of good and evil in the world.

The old haunts, the old fields and woods, the copses, ponds, and gardens, the rooms of the old house where she had spent a couple of years seven years ago, were all carefully revisited by her. She had been young there, or comparatively so, for she forgot the time when she ever *was* young—but she remembered her thoughts and feelings seven years back, and contrasted them with those which she had at present, now that she had seen the world and lived with great people, and raised herself far beyond her original humble station.

"I have passed beyond it, because I have brains," Becky thought, "and almost all the rest of the world are fools. I could not go back, and consort with those people now, whom I used to meet in my father's studio. Lords come up to my door with stars and garters instead of poor artists with screws of tobacco in their pockets. I have a gentleman for my husband, and an Earl's daughter for my sister, in the very house where I was

little better than a servant a few years ago. But am I much better to do now in the world than I was when I was the poor painter's daughter, and wheedled the grocer round the corner for sugar and tea? Suppose I had married Francis who was so fond of me—I couldn't have been much poorer than I am now. Heigho! I wish I could exchange my position in society, and all my relations for a snug sum in the Three per Cent. Consols;" for so it was that Becky felt the Vanity of human affairs, and it was in those securities that she would have liked to cast anchor.

It may, perhaps, have struck her that to have been honest and humble, to have done her duty, and to have marched straightforward on her way, would have brought her as near happiness as that path by which she was striving to attain it. But,—just as the children at Queen's Crawley went round the room, where the body of their father lay;—if ever Becky had these thoughts, she was accustomed to walk round them, and not look in. She eluded them, and despised them—or at least she was committed to the other path from which retreat was now impossible. And for my part I believe that remorse is the least active of all a man's moral senses —the very easiest to be deadened when wakened: and in some never wakened at all. We grieve at being found out, and at the idea of shame or punishment; but the mere sense of wrong makes very few people unhappy in Vanity Fair.

So Rebecca, during her stay at Queen's Crawley, made as many friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness as she could possibly bring under control. Lady Jane and her husband bade her farewell with the warmest demonstrations of good will. They looked forward

with pleasure to the time when the family-house in Gaunt Street being repaired and beautified, they were to meet again in London. Lady Southdown made her up a packet of medicine, and sent a letter by her to the Rev. Lawrence Grills, exhorting that gentleman to save the brand who "honoured" the letter from the burning. Pitt accompanied them with four horses in the carriage to Mudbury, having sent on their baggage in a cart previously, accompanied with loads of game.

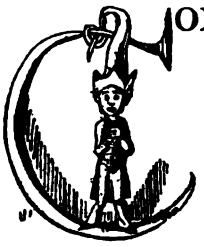
"How happy you will be to see your darling little boy again," Lady Crawley said, taking leave of her kinswoman.

"O so happy!" said Rebecca, throwing up the green eyes. She was immensely happy to be free of the place, and yet loth to go. Queen's Crawley was abominably stupid; and yet the air there was somehow purer than that which she had been accustomed to breathe. Everybody had been dull, but had been kind in their way. "It is all the influence of a long course of Three per Cents," Becky said to herself, and was right very likely.

However, the London lamps flashed joyfully as the stage rolled into Piccadilly, and Briggs had made a beautiful fire in Curzon Street, and little Rawdon was up to welcome back his papa and mamma.

CHAPTER XLII

WHICH TREATS OF THE OSBORNE FAMILY



CONSIDERABLE time has elapsed since we have seen our respectable friend, old Mr. Osborne of Russell Square. He has not been the happiest of mortals since last we met him. Events have occurred which have not improved his temper, and in more instances than one he has not been allowed to have his own way. To be thwarted in this reasonable desire was always very injurious to the old gentleman; and resistance became doubly exasperating when gout, age, loneliness, and the force of many disappointments combined to weigh him down. His stiff black hair began to grow quite white soon after his son's death; his face grew redder; his hands trembled more and more as he poured out his glass of port wine. He led his clerks a dire life in the City: his family at home were not much happier. I doubt if Rebecca, whom we have seen piously praying for Consols, would have exchanged her poverty and the dare-devil excitement and chances of her life, for Osborne's money and the humdrum gloom which enveloped him. He had proposed for Miss Swartz, but had been rejected scornfully by the partizans of that lady, who married her to a young sprig of Scotch nobility. He was a man to have married a woman out of low life, and bullied her dreadfully

afterwards: but no person presented herself suitable to his taste; and, instead, he tyrannised over his unmarried daughter, at home. She had a fine carriage and fine horses, and sate at the head of a table loaded with the grandest plate. She had a cheque-book, a prize footman to follow her when she walked, unlimited credit, and bows and compliments from all the tradesmen, and all the appurtenances of an heiress; but she spent a woful time. The little charity-girls at the Foundling, the sweeperess at the crossing, the poorest under-kitchen-maid in the servants' hall, was happy compared to that unfortunate and now middle-aged young lady.

Frederick Bullock, Esq., of the house of Bullock, Hulker, and Bullock, had married Maria Osborne, not without a great deal of difficulty and grumbling on Mr. Bullock's part. George being dead and cut out of his father's will, Frederick insisted that the half of the old gentleman's property should be settled upon his Maria, and indeed, for a long time, refused "to come to the scratch" (it was Mr. Frederick's own expression) on any other terms. Osborne said Fred had agreed to take his daughter with twenty thousand, and he should bind himself to no more. "Fred might take it, and welcome, or leave it, and go and be hanged." Fred, whose hopes had been raised when George had been disinherited, thought himself infamously swindled by the old merchant, and for some time made as if he would break off the match altogether. Osborne withdrew his account from Bullock and Hulker's, went on 'Change with a horsewhip which he swore he would lay across the back of a certain scoundrel that should be nameless, and demeaned himself in his usual violent manner. Jane Osborne condoled with her sister Maria during this family

feud. "I always told you, Maria, that it was your money he loved, and not you," she said, soothingly.

"He selected *me* and my money at any rate: he didn't choose you and yours," replied Maria, tossing up her head.

The rupture was, however, only temporary. Fred's father and senior partners counselled him to take Maria, even with the twenty thousand settled, half down, and half at the death of Mr. Osborne, with the chances of the further division of the property. So he "knuckled down," again to use his own phrase; and sent old Hulker with peaceable overtures to Osborne. It was his father, he said, who would not hear of the match, and had made the difficulties; he was most anxious to keep the engagement. The excuse was sulkily accepted by Mr. Osborne. Hulker and Bullock were a high family of the City aristocracy, and connected with the "nobs" at the West End. It was something for the old man to be able to say, "My son, sir, of the house of Hulker, Bullock, and Co., sir; my daughter's cousin, Lady Mary Mango, sir, daughter of the Right Hon. the Earl of Castlemouldy." In his imagination he saw his house peopled by the "nobs." So he forgave young Bullock, and consented that the marriage should take place.

It was a grand affair—the bridegroom's relatives giving the breakfast, their habitations being near St. George's, Hanover Square, where the business took place. The "nobs of the West End" were invited, and many of them signed the book. Mr. Mango and Lady Mary Mango were there, with the dear young Gwendoline and Guinever Mango as bridesmaids; Colonel Bludyer of the Dragoon Guards (eldest son of the house of Bludyer Brothers, Mincing Lane), another cousin of

the bridegroom, and the Honourable Mrs. Bludyer; the Honourable George Boulter, Lord Levant's son, and his lady, Miss Mango that was; Lord Viscount Castletoddy; Honourable James McMull and Mrs. McMull (formerly Miss Swartz), and a host of fashionables, who have all married into Lombard Street, and done a great deal to ennoble Cornhill.

The young couple had a house near Berkeley Square, and a small villa at Roehampton, among the banking colony there. Fred was considered to have made rather a *mésalliance* by the ladies of his family, whose grandfather had been in a Charity School, and who were allied through the husbands with some of the best blood in England. And Maria was bound, by superior pride and great care in the composition of her visiting-book, to make up for the defects of birth; and felt it her duty to see her father and sister as little as possible.

That she should utterly break with the old man, who had still so many scores of thousand pounds to give away, is absurd to suppose. Fred Bullock would never allow her to do that. But she was still young and incapable of hiding her feelings: and by inviting her papa and sister to her third-rate parties, and behaving very coldly to them when they came, and by avoiding Russell Square, and indiscreetly begging her father to quit that odious vulgar place; she did more harm than all Frederick's diplomacy could repair, and perilled her chance of her inheritance like a giddy heedless creature as she was.

"So Russell Square is not good enough for Mrs. Maria, hey?" said the old gentleman, rattling up the carriage-windows as he and his daughter drove away one night from Mrs. Frederick Bullock's, after dinner. "So

she invites her father and sister to a second day's dinner (if those sides, or *ontrys,* as she calls 'em, weren't served yesterday, I'm d—d), and to meet City folks and littery men, and keeps the Earls and the Ladies, and the Honourables to herself. Honourables? Damn Honourables. I am a plain British merchant, I am: and could buy the beggarly hounds over and over. Lords, indeed! —why, at one of her *swarreys* I saw one of 'em speak to a dam fiddler—a fellar I despise. And they won't come to Russell Square, won't they? Why, I'll lay my life I've got a better glass of wine, and pay a better figure for it, and can show a handsomer service of silver, and can lay a better dinner on my mahogany, than ever they see on theirs—the cringing, sneaking, stuck-up fools. Drive on quick, James: I want to get back to Russell Square—ha, ha!" and he sank back into the corner with a furious laugh. With such reflections on his own superior merit, it was the custom of the old gentleman not unfrequently to console himself.

Jane Osborne could not but concur in these opinions respecting her sister's conduct; and when Mrs. Frederick's first-born, Frederick Augustus Howard Stanley Devereux Bullock, was born, old Osborne, who was invited to the christening and to be godfather, contented himself with sending the child a gold cup, with twenty guineas inside it for the nurse. "That's more than any of your Lords will give, *I'll* warrant," he said, and refused to attend at the ceremony.

The splendour of the gift, however, caused great satisfaction to the house of Bullock. Maria thought that her father was very much pleased with her, and Frederick augured the best for his little son and heir.

One can fancy the pangs with which Miss Osborne

in her solitude in Russell Square read the *Morning Post*, where her sister's name occurred every now and then, in the articles headed "Fashionable Réunions," and where she had an opportunity of reading a description of Mrs. F. Bullock's costume, when presented at the Drawing-Room by Lady Frederica Bullock. Jane's own life, as we have said, admitted of no such grandeur. It was an awful existence. She had to get up of black winter's mornings to make breakfast for her scowling old father, who would have turned the whole house out of doors if his tea had not been ready at half-past eight. She remained silent opposite to him, listening to the urn hissing, and sitting in tremor while the parent read his paper, and consumed his accustomed portion of muffins and tea. At half-past nine he rose and went to the City, and she was almost free till dinner-time, to make visitations in the kitchen, and to scold the servants: to drive abroad and descend upon the tradesmen, who were prodigiously respectful: to leave her cards and her papa's at the great glum respectable houses of their City friends; or to sit alone in the large drawing-room, expecting visitors; and working at a huge piece of worsted by the fire, on the sofa, hard by the great Iphigenia clock, which ticked and tolled with mournful loudness in the dreary room. The great glass over the mantel-piece, faced by the other great console glass at the opposite end of the room, increased and multiplied between them the brown Holland bag in which the chandelier hung; until you saw these brown Holland bags fading away in endless perspectives, and this apartment of Miss Osborne's seemed the centre of a system of drawing-rooms. When she removed the cordovan leather from the grand piano, and ventured to play a few notes on it, it sounded

with a mournful sadness, startling the dismal echoes of the house. George's picture was gone, and laid up stairs in a lumber-room in the garret; and though there was a consciousness of him, and father and daughter often instinctively knew that they were thinking of him, no mention was ever made of the brave and once darling son.

At five o'clock Mr. Osborne came back to his dinner, which he and his daughter took in silence (seldom broken, except when he swore and was savage, if the cooking was not to his liking), or which they shared twice in a month with a party of dismal friends of Osborne's rank and age. Old Dr. Gulp and his lady from Bloomsbury Square: old Mr. Frowser, the attorney, from Bedford Row, a very great man, and from his business, hand-in-glove with the "nobs at the West End;" old Colonel Livermore, of the Bombay Army, and Mrs. Livermore, from Upper Bedford Place: old Serjeant Toffy and Mrs. Toffy; and sometimes old Sir Thomas Coffin and Lady Coffin, from Bedford Square. Sir Thomas was celebrated as a hanging judge, and the particular tawny port was produced when he dined with Mr. Osborne.

These people and their like gave the pompous Russell Square merchant pompous dinners back again. They had solemn rubbers of whist, when they went up stairs after drinking, and their carriages were called at half-past ten. Many rich people, whom we poor devils are in the habit of envying, lead contentedly an existence like that above described. Jane Osborne scarcely ever met a man under sixty, and almost the only bachelor who appeared in their society was Mr. Smirk, the celebrated ladies' doctor.

I can't say that nothing had occurred to disturb the monotony of this awful existence: the fact is, there had been a secret in poor Jane's life which had made her father more savage and morose than even nature, pride, and over-feeding had made him. This secret was connected with Miss Wirt, who had a cousin an artist, Mr. Smee, very celebrated since as a portrait-painter and R.A., but who once was glad enough to give drawing-lessons to ladies of fashion. Mr. Smee has forgotten where Russell Square is now, but he was glad enough to visit it in the year 1818, when Miss Osborne had instruction from him.

Smee (formerly a pupil of Sharpe of Frith Street, a dissolute, irregular, and unsuccessful man, but a man with great knowledge of his art) being the cousin of Miss Wirt, we say, and introduced by her to Miss Osborne, whose hand and heart were still free after various incomplete love affairs, felt a great attachment for this lady, and it is believed inspired one in her bosom. Miss Wirt was the confidante of this intrigue. I know not whether she used to leave the room where the master and his pupil were painting, in order to give them an opportunity for exchanging those vows and sentiments which cannot be uttered advantageously in the presence of a third party: I know not whether she hoped that should her cousin succeed in carrying off the rich merchant's daughter, he would give Miss Wirt a portion of the wealth which she had enabled him to win—all that is certain is, that Mr. Osborne got some hint of the transaction, came back from the City abruptly, and entered the drawing-room with his bamboo cane; found the painter, the pupil, and the companion all looking exceedingly pale there; turned the former out of doors

with menaces that he would break every bone in his skin, and half-an-hour afterwards dismissed Miss Wirt likewise, kicking her trunks down the stairs, trampling on her band-boxes, and shaking his fist at her hackney coach, as it bore her away.

Jane Osborne kept her bed-room for many days. She was not allowed to have a companion afterwards. Her father swore to her that she should not have a shilling of his money if she made any match without his concurrence; and as he wanted a woman to keep his house, he did not choose that she should marry: so that she was obliged to give up all projects with which Cupid had any share. During her papa's life, then, she resigned herself to the manner of existence here described, and was content to be an Old Maid. Her sister, meanwhile, was having children with finer names every year—and the intercourse between the two grew fainter continually. "Jane and I do not move in the same sphere of life," Mrs. Bullock said. "I regard her as a sister, of course" —which means—what does it mean when a lady says that she regards Jane as a sister?

It has been described how the Misses Dobbin lived with their father at a fine villa at Denmark Hill, where there were beautiful graperies and peach-trees which delighted little Georgy Osborne. The Misses Dobbin, who drove often to Brompton to see our dear Amelia, came sometimes to Russell Square too, to pay a visit to their old acquaintance Miss Osborne. I believe it was in consequence of the commands of their brother the Major in India (for whom their papa had a prodigious respect), that they paid attention to Mrs. George; for the Major, the godfather and guardian of Amelia's little

boy, still hoped that the child's grandfather might be induced to relent towards him, and acknowledge him for the sake of his son. The Misses Dobbin kept Miss Osborne acquainted with the state of Amelia's affairs; how she was living with her father and mother; how poor they were; how they wondered what men, and such men as their brother and dear Captain Osborne, could find in such an insignificant little chit; how she was still, as heretofore, a namby-pamby milk-and-water affected creature—but how the boy was really the noblest little boy ever seen—for the hearts of all women warm towards young children, and the sourest spinster is kind to them.

One day, after great entreaties on the part of the Misses Dobbin, Amelia allowed little George to go and pass a day with them at Denmark Hill—a part of which day she spent herself in writing to the Major in India. She congratulated him on the happy news which his sisters had just conveyed to her. She prayed for his prosperity, and that of the bride he had chosen. She thanked him for a thousand thousand kind offices and proofs of steadfast friendship to her in her affliction. She told him the last news about little Georgy, and how he was gone to spend that very day with his sisters in the country. She underlined the letter a great deal, and she signed herself affectionately his friend, Amelia Osborne. She forgot to send any message of kindness to Lady O'Dowd, as her wont was—and did not mention Glorvina by name, and only in italics, as the Major's *bride*, for whom she begged *blessings*. But the news of the marriage removed the reserve which she had kept up towards him. She was glad to be able to own and feel how warmly and gratefully she regarded him—and as for the idea of being jealous of Glorvina, (Glorvina,

indeed!) Amelia would have scouted it, if an angel from heaven had hinted it to her.

That night, when Georgy came back in the pony-carriage in which he rejoiced, and in which he was driven by Sir Wm. Dobbin's old coachman, he had round his neck a fine gold chain and watch. He said an old lady, not pretty, had given it him, who cried and kissed him a great deal. But he didn't like her. He liked grapes very much. And he only liked his mamma. Amelia shrunk and started: the timid soul felt a presentiment of terror when she heard that the relations of the child's father had seen him.

Miss Osborne came back to give her father his dinner. He had made a good speculation in the City, and was rather in a good humour that day, and chanced to remark the agitation under which she laboured. "What's the matter, Miss Osborne?" he deigned to say.

The woman burst into tears. "O, sir," she said, "I've seen little George. He is as beautiful as an angel—and so like him!" The old man opposite to her did not say a word, but flushed up, and began to tremble in every limb.

CHAPTER XLIII

IN WHICH THE READER HAS TO DOUBLE THE CAPE

THE astonished reader must be called upon to transport himself ten thousand miles to the military station of Bundlegunge, in the Madras division of our Indian empire, where our gallant old friends of the —th regiment are quartered under the command of the brave Colonel, Sir Michael O'Dowd. Time has dealt kindly with that stout officer, as it does ordinarily with men who have good stomachs and good tempers, and are not perplexed over much by fatigue of the brain. The Colonel plays a good knife and fork at tiffin, and resumes those weapons with great success at dinner. He smokes his hookah after both meals, and puffs as quietly while his wife scolds him, as he did under the fire of the French at Waterloo. Age and heat have not diminished the activity or the eloquence of the descendant of the Malonys and the Molloys. Her ladyship, our old acquaintance, is as much at home at Madras as at Brussels—in the cantonment as under the tents. On the march you saw her

at the head of the regiment seated on a royal elephant, a noble sight. Mounted on that beast, she has been into action with tigers in the jungle: she has been received by native princes, who have welcomed her and Glorvina into the recesses of their zenanas and offered her shawls and jewels which it went to her heart to refuse. The sentries of all arms salute her wherever she makes her appearance: and she touches her hat gravely to their salutation. Lady O'Dowd is one of the greatest ladies in the Presidency of Madras—her quarrel with Lady Smith, wife of Sir Minos Smith the puisne judge, is still remembered by some at Madras, when the Colonel's lady snapped her fingers in the Judge's lady's face, and said *she'd* never walk behind ever a beggarly civilian. Even now, though it is five-and-twenty years ago, people remember Lady O'Dowd performing a jig at Government House, where she danced down two Aides-de-Camp, a Major of Madras cavalry, and two gentlemen of the Civil Service; and, persuaded by Major Dobbin, C.B., second in command of the —th, to retire to the supper room, *lassata nondum satiata recessit.*

Peggy O'Dowd is indeed the same as ever: kind in act and thought: impetuous in temper; eager to command: a tyrant over her Michael: a dragon amongst all the ladies of the regiment: a mother to all the young men, whom she tends in their sickness, defends in all their scrapes, and with whom Lady Peggy is immensely popular. But the Subalterns' and Captains' ladies (the Major is unmarried) cabal against her a good deal. They say that Glorvina gives herself airs, and that Peggy herself is intolerably domineering. She interfered with a little congregation which Mrs. Kirk had got up, and laughed the young men away from her sermons,

stating that a soldier's wife had no business to be a parson: that Mrs. Kirk would be much better mending her husband's clothes: and, if the regiment wanted sermons, that she had the finest in the world, those of her uncle, the Dean. She abruptly put a termination to a flirtation which Lieutenant Stubble of the regiment had commenced with the Surgeon's wife, threatening to come down upon Stubble for the money which he had borrowed from her (for the young fellow was still of an extravagant turn) unless he broke off at once and went to the Cape, on sick leave. On the other hand, she housed and sheltered Mrs. Posky, who fled from her bungalow one night, pursued by her infuriate husband, wielding his second brandy bottle, and actually carried Posky through the delirium tremens, and broke him of the habit of drinking, which had grown upon that officer as all evil habits will grow upon men. In a word, in adversity she was the best of comforters, in good fortune the most troublesome of friends; having a perfectly good opinion of herself always, and an indomitable resolution to have her own way.

Among other points, she had made up her mind that Glorvina should marry our old friend Dobbin. Mrs. O'Dowd knew the Major's expectations and appreciated his good qualities, and the high character which he enjoyed in his profession. Glorvina, a very handsome, fresh-coloured, black-haired, blue-eyed young lady, who could ride a horse, or play a sonata with any girl out of the County Cork, seemed to be the very person destined to insure Dobbin's happiness—much more than that poor good little weak-spur'ted Amelia, about whom he used to take on so.—"Look at Glorvina enter a room," Mrs. O'Dowd would say, "and compare her with

that poor Mrs. Osborne, who couldn't say bo to a goose. She'd be worthy of you, Major—you're a quiet man yourself, and want some one to talk for ye. And though she does not come of such good blood as the Malonys or Molloys, let me tell ye, she's of an ancient family that any nobleman might be proud to marry into."

But before she had come to such a resolution, and determined to subjugate Major Dobbin by her endearments, it must be owned that Glorvina had practised them a good deal elsewhere. She had had a season in Dublin, and who knows how many in Cork, Killarney, and Mallow? She had flirted with all the marriageable officers whom the depôts of her country afforded, and all the bachelor squires who seemed eligible. She had been engaged to be married a half score times in Ireland, besides the clergyman at Bath who used her so ill. She had flirted all the way to Madras with the Captain and chief-mate of the Ramchunder East Indiaman, and had a season at the Presidency with her brother and Mrs. O'Dowd who was staying there, while the Major of the regiment was in command at the station. Everybody admired her there: everybody danced with her: but no one proposed who was worth the marrying; one or two exceedingly young subalterns sighed after her, and a beardless civilian or two; but she rejected these as beneath her pretensions; and other and younger virgins than Glorvina were married before her. There are women, and handsome women too, who have this fortune in life. They fall in love with the utmost generosity; they ride and walk with half the Army-list, though they draw near to forty, and yet the Misses O'Grady are Misses O'Grady still: Glorvina persisted that but for Lady O'Dowd's unlucky quarrel with the Judge's lady,

she would have made a good match at Madras, where old Mr. Chutney, who was at the head of the civil service (and who afterwards married Miss Dolby, a young lady only thirteen years of age, who had just arrived from school in Europe), was just at the point of proposing to her.

Well, although Lady O'Dowd and Glorvina quarrelled a great number of times every day and upon almost every conceivable subject—indeed, if Mick O'Dowd had not possessed the temper of an angel, two such women constantly about his ears would have driven him out of his senses—yet they agreed between themselves on this point, that Glorvina should marry Major Dobbin, and were determined that the Major should have no rest until the arrangement was brought about. Undismayed by forty or fifty previous defeats, Glorvina laid siege to him. She sang Irish Melodies at him unceasingly. She asked him so frequently and pathetically, will ye come to the bower? that it is a wonder how any man of feeling could have resisted the invitation. She was never tired of inquiring, if Sorrow had his young days faded; and was ready to listen and weep like Desdemona at the stories of his dangers and his campaigns. It has been said that our honest and dear old friend used to perform on the flute in private: Glorvina insisted upon having duets with him, and Lady O'Dowd would rise and artlessly quit the room, when the young couple were so engaged. Glorvina forced the Major to ride with her of mornings. The whole cantonment saw them set out and return. She was constantly writing notes over to him at his house, borrowing his books, and scoring with her great pencil-marks such passages of sentiment or humour as awakened her

Glorvina tries her fascinations
on the Major

sympathy. She borrowed his horses, his servants, his spoons, and palankin;—no wonder that public rumour assigned her to him, and that the Major's sisters in England should fancy they were about to have a sister-in-law.

Dobbin, who was thus vigorously besieged, was in the meanwhile in a state of the most odious tranquillity. He used to laugh when the young fellows of the regiment joked him about Glorvina's manifest attentions to him. "Bah!" said he, "she is only keeping her hand in—she practises upon me as she does upon Mrs. Tozer's piano, because it's the most handy instrument in the station. I am much too battered and old for such a fine young lady as Glorvina." And so he went on riding with her, and copying music and verses into her albums, and playing at chess with her very submissively; for it is with these simple amusements that some officers in India are accustomed to while away their leisure moments; while others of a less domestic turn hunt hogs, and shoot snipes, or gamble and smoke cheroots, and betake themselves to brandy-and-water. As for Sir Michael O'Dowd, though his lady and her sister both urged him to call upon the Major to explain himself, and not keep on torturing a poor innocent girl in that shameful way, the old soldier refused point-blank to have anything to do with the conspiracy. "'Faith, the Major's big enough to choose for himself," Sir Michael said; "he'll ask ye when he wants ye;"—or else he would turn the matter off jocularly, declaring that "Dobbin was too young to keep house, and had written home to ask lave of his mamma." Nay, he went farther, and in private communications with his Major, would caution and rally him—crying, "Mind your oi, Dob, my boy, them girls is bent

on mischief—me Lady has just got a box of gowns from Europe, and there's a pink satin for Glorvina, which will finish ye, Dob, if it's in the power of woman or satin to move ye."

But the truth is, neither beauty nor fashion could conquer him. Our honest friend had but one idea of a woman in his head, and that one did not in the least resemble Miss Glorvina O'Dowd in pink satin. A gentle little woman in black, with large eyes and brown hair, seldom speaking, save when spoken to, and then in a voice not the least resembling Miss Glorvina's—a soft young mother tending an infant and beckoning the Major up with a smile to look at him—a rosy-cheeked lass coming singing into the room in Russell Square or hanging on George Osborne's arm, happy and loving—there was but this image that filled our honest Major's mind by day and by night, and reigned over it always. Very likely Amelia was not like the portrait the Major had formed of her: there was a figure in a book of fashions which his sisters had in England, and with which William had made away privately, pasting it into the lid of his desk, and fancying he saw some resemblance to Mrs. Osborne in the print, whereas I have seen it, and can vouch that it is but the picture of a high waisted gown with an impossible doll's face simpering over it—and, perhaps, Mr. Dobbin's sentimental Amelia was no more like the real one than this absurd little print which he cherished. But what man in love, of us, is better informed?—or is he much happier when he sees and owns his delusion? Dobbin was under this spell. He did not bother his friends and the public much about his feelings, or indeed lose his natural rest or appetite on account of them. His head has grizzled since we saw him last; and

a line or two of silver may be seen in the soft brown hair likewise. But his feelings are not in the least changed or oldened; and his love remains as fresh as a man's recollections of boyhood are.

We have said how the two Misses Dobbin and Amelia, the Major's correspondents in Europe, wrote him letters from England; Mrs. Osborne congratulating him with great candour and cordiality upon his approaching nuptials with Miss O'Dowd.

"Your sister has just kindly visited me," Amelia wrote in her letter, "and informed me of an *interesting event,* upon which I beg to offer my *most sincere congratulations.* I hope the young lady to whom I hear

you are to be *united* will in every respect prove worthy of one who is himself all kindness and goodness. The poor widow has only her prayers to offer, and her cordial cordial wishes for *your prosperity!* Georgy sends his love to *his dear godpapa,* and hopes that you will not forget him. I tell him that you are about to form *other ties,* with one who I am sure merits *all your affection,* but that although such ties must of course be the strongest and most sacred, and supersede *all others,* yet that I am sure the widow and the child whom you have ever protected and loved will always *have a corner in your heart.*" The letter, which has been before alluded to, went on in this strain, protesting throughout as to the extreme satisfaction of the writer.

This letter, which arrived by the very same ship which brought out Lady O'Dowd's box of millinery from London (and which you may be sure Dobbin opened before anyone of the other packets which the mail brought him), put the receiver into such a state of mind that Glorvina, and her pink satin, and everything belonging to her, became perfectly odious to him. The Major cursed the talk of women; and the sex in general. Everything annoyed him that day—the parade was insufferably hot and wearisome. Good heavens! was a man of intellect to waste his life, day after day, inspecting cross-belts, and putting fools through their manœuvres? The senseless chatter of the young men at mess was more than ever jarring. What cared he, a man on the high road to forty, to know how many snipes Lieutenant Smith had shot, or what were the performances of Ensign Brown's mare? The jokes about the table filled him with shame. He was too old to listen to the banter of the assistant-surgeon and the slang of the youngsters, at which old

O'Dowd, with his bald head and red face, laughed quite easily. The old man had listened to those jokes any time these thirty years—Dobbin himself had been fifteen years hearing them. And after the boisterous dulness of the mess-table, the quarrels and scandal of the ladies of the regiment! It was unbearable, shameful. "O Amelia, Amelia," he thought, "you to whom I have been so faithful—you reproach me! It is because you cannot feel for me, that I drag on this wearisome life. And you reward me after years of devotion by giving me your blessing upon my marriage, forsooth, with this flaunting Irish girl!" Sick and sorry felt poor William: more than ever wretched and lonely. He would like to have done with life and its vanity altogether—so bootless and unsatisfactory the struggle, so cheerless and dreary the prospect seemed to him. He lay all that night sleepless, and yearning to go home. Amelia's letter had fallen as a blank upon him. No fidelity, no constant truth and passion, could move her into warmth. She would not see that he loved her. Tossing in his bed, he spoke out to her. "Good God, Amelia!" he said, "don't you know that I only love you in the world—you, who are a stone to me—you, whom I tended through months and months of illness and grief, and who bade me farewell with a smile on your face, and forgot me before the door shut between us!" The native servants lying outside his verandahs beheld with wonder the Major, so cold and quiet ordinarily, at present so passionately moved and cast down. Would she have pitied him had she seen him? He read over and over all the letters which he ever had from her—letters of business relative to the little property which he had made her believe her husband had left to her—brief notes of invitation—every scrap of

writing that she had ever sent to him—how cold, how kind, how hopeless, how selfish they were!

Had there been some kind gentle soul near at hand who could read and appreciate this silent generous heart, who knows but that the reign of Amelia might have been over, and that friend William's love might have flowed into a kinder channel? But there was only Glorvina of the jetty ringlets with whom his intercourse was familiar, and this dashing young woman was not bent upon loving the Major, but rather on making the Major admire *her*—a most vain and hopeless task, too, at least considering the means that the poor girl possessed to carry it out. She curled her hair and showed her shoulders at him, as much as to say, did ye ever see such jet ringlets and such a complexion? She grinned at him so that he might see that every tooth in her head was sound—and he never heeded all these charms. Very soon after the arrival of the box of millinery, and perhaps indeed in honour of it, Lady O'Dowd and the ladies of the King's Regiment gave a ball to the Company's Regiments and the civilians at the station. Glorvina sported the killing pink frock, and the Major, who attended the party and walked very ruefully up and down the rooms, never so much as perceived the pink garment. Glorvina danced past him in a fury with all the young subalterns of the station, and the Major was not in the least jealous of her performance, or angry because Captain Bangles of the Cavalry handed her to supper. It was not jealousy, or frocks, or shoulders, that could move him, and Glorvina had nothing more.

So these two were each exemplifying the Vanity of this life, and each longing for what he or she could not get. Glorvina cried with rage at the failure. She had set her mind on the Major "more than on any of the

others," she owned, sobbing. "He'll break my heart, he will, Peggy," she would whimper to her sister-in-law when they were good friends; "sure every one of me frocks must be taken in—it's such a skeleton I'm growing." Fat or thin, laughing or melancholy, on horseback or the music-stool, it was all the same to the Major. And the Colonel, puffing his pipe and listening to these complaints, would suggest that Glory should have some black frocks out in the next box from London, and told a mysterious story of a lady in Ireland who died of grief for the loss of her husband before she got ere a one.

While the Major was going on in this tantalizing way, not proposing, and declining to fall in love, there came another ship from Europe bringing letters on board, and amongst them some more for the heartless man. These were home letters bearing an earlier post mark than that of the former packets, and as Major Dobbin recognized among his, the handwriting of his sister, who always crossed and recrossed her letters to her brother,—gathered together all the possible bad news which she could collect, abused him and read him lectures with sisterly frankness, and always left him miserable for the day after "dearest William" had achieved the perusal of one of her epistles—the truth must be told that dearest William did not hurry himself to break the seal of Miss Dobbin's letter, but waited for a particularly favourable day and mood for doing so. A fortnight before, moreover, he had written to scold her for telling those absurd stories to Mrs. Osborne, and had despatched a letter in reply to that lady, undeceiving her with respect to the reports concerning him, and assuring her that "he had no sort of present intention of altering his condition."

Two or three nights after the arrival of the second

package of letters, the Major had passed the evening pretty cheerfully at Lady O'Dowd's house, where Glorvina thought that he listened with rather more attention than usual to the Meeting of the Wathers, the Minsthrel Boy, and one or two other specimens of song with which she favoured him (the truth is, he was no more listening to Glorvina than to the howling of the jackals in the moonlight outside, and the delusion was hers as usual), and having played his game at chess with her, (cribbage with the surgeon was Lady O'Dowd's favourite evening pastime), Major Dobbin took leave of the Colonel's family at his usual hour, and retired to his own house.

There on his table, his sister's letter lay reproaching him. He took it up, ashamed rather of his negligence regarding it, and prepared himself for a disagreeable hour's communing with that crabbed-handed absent relative. . . . . It may have been an hour after the Major's departure from the Colonel's house—Sir Michael was sleeping the sleep of the just; Glorvina had arranged her black ringlets in the innumerable little bits of paper, in which it was her habit to confine them; Lady O'Dowd, too, had gone to her bed in the nuptial chamber on the ground floor, and had tucked her mosquito curtains round her fair form, when the guard at the gates of the Commanding-officer's compound, beheld Major Dobbin, in the moonlight, rushing towards the house with a swift step and a very agitated countenance, and he passed the sentinel and went up to the windows of the Colonel's bed-chamber.

"O'Dowd—Colonel!" said Dobbin, and kept up a great shouting.

"Heavens, Meejor!" said Glorvina of the curl-papers, putting out her head too, from her window.

"What is it, Dob, me boy?" said the Colonel, expecting there was a fire in the station, or that the route had come from head-quarters.

"I—I must have leave of absence. I must go to England—on the most urgent private affairs," Dobbin said.

"Good heavens, what has happened!" thought Glorvina, trembling with all the papillotes.

"I want to be off—now—to-night," Dobbin continued; and the Colonel getting up, came out to parley with him.

In the postscript of Miss Dobbin's cross-letter, the Major had just come upon a paragraph, to the following effect:—"I drove yesterday to see your old *acquaintance,* Mrs. Osborne. The wretched place they live at, since they were bankrupts, you know—Mr. S., to judge from a *brass plate* on the door of his hut (it is little better), is a coal-merchant. The little boy, your godson, is certainly a fine child, though forward, and inclined to be saucy and self-willed. But we have taken notice of him as you wish it, and have introduced him to his aunt, Miss O., who was rather pleased with him. Perhaps his grandpapa, not the bankrupt one, who is almost doting, but Mr. Osborne, of Russell Square, may be induced to relent towards the child of your friend, *his erring and self-willed son.* And Amelia will not be ill-disposed to give him up. The widow is *consoled,* and is about to marry a reverend gentleman, the Rev. Mr. Binny, one of the curates of Brompton. A poor match. But Mrs. O. is getting old, and I saw a great deal of gray in her hair—she was in very good spirits: and your little godson overate himself at our house. Mamma sends her love with that of your affectionate, Ann Dobbin."

CHAPTER XLIV

A ROUND-ABOUT CHAPTER BETWEEN LONDON AND HAMPSHIRE

OUR old friends the Crawleys' family house, in Great Gaunt Street, still bore over its front the hatchment which had been placed there as a token of mourning for Sir Pitt Crawley's demise, yet this heraldic emblem was in itself a very splendid and gaudy piece of furniture, and all the rest of the mansion became more brilliant than it had ever been during the late baronet's reign. The black outer-coating of the bricks was removed, and they appeared with a cheerful, blushing face streaked with white: the old bronze lions of the knocker were gilt handsomely, the railings painted, and the dismallest house in Great Gaunt Street, became the smartest in the whole quarter, before the green leaves in Hampshire had replaced those yellowing ones which were on the trees in Queen's Crawley avenue when old Sir Pitt Crawley passed under them for the last time.

A little woman, with a carriage to correspond, was perpetually seen about this mansion; an elderly spinster, accompanied by a little boy, also might be remarked coming thither daily. It was Miss Briggs and little Rawdon, whose business it was to see to the inward reno-

vation of Sir Pitt's house, to superintend the female band engaged in stitching the blinds and hangings, to poke and rummage in the drawers and cupboards crammed with the dirty relics and congregated trumperies of a couple of generations of Lady Crawleys, and to take inventories of the china, the glass, and other properties in the closets and store-rooms.

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was general-in-chief over these arrangements, with full orders from Sir Pitt to sell, barter, confiscate, or purchase furniture: and she enjoyed herself not a little in an occupation which gave full scope to her taste and ingenuity. The renovation of the house was determined upon when Sir Pitt came to town in November to see his lawyers, and when he passed nearly

a week in Curzon Street, under the roof of his affectionate brother and sister.

He had put up at an hotel at first; but Becky, as soon as she heard of the Baronet's arrival, went off alone to greet him, and returned in an hour to Curzon Street with Sir Pitt in the carriage by her side. It was impossible sometimes to resist this artless little creature's hospitalities, so kindly were they pressed, so frankly and amiably offered. Becky seized Pitt's hand in a transport of gratitude when he agreed to come. "Thank you," she said, squeezing it, and looking into the Baronet's eyes, who blushed a good deal; "how happy this will make Rawdon." She bustled up to Pitt's bedroom, leading on the servants, who were carrying his trunks thither. She came in herself laughing, with a coal-scuttle out of her own room.

A fire was blazing already in Sir Pitt's apartment (it was Miss Briggs's room, by the way, who was sent up stairs to sleep with the maid). "I knew I should bring you," she said, with pleasure beaming in her glance. Indeed, she was really sincerely happy at having him for a guest.

Becky made Rawdon dine out once or twice on business, while Pitt stayed with them, and the Baronet passed the happy evening alone with her and Briggs. She went down stairs to the kitchen and actually cooked little dishes for him. "Isn't it a good salmi?" she said; "I made it for you. I can make you better dishes than that: and will when you come to see me."

"Everything you do, you do well," said the Baronet, gallantly. "The salmi is excellent indeed."

"A poor man's wife," Rebecca replied, gaily, "must make herself useful, you know:" on which her brother-

in-law vowed that " she was fit to be the wife of an Emperor, and that to be skilful in domestic duties was surely one of the most charming of woman's qualities." And Sir Pitt thought, with something like mortification, of Lady Jane at home, and of a certain pie which she had insisted on making, and serving to him at dinner—a most abominable pie.

Besides the salmi, which was made of Lord Steyne's pheasants from his lordship's cottage of Stillbrook, Becky gave her brother-in-law a bottle of white wine, some that Rawdon had brought with him from France, and had picked up for nothing, the little story-teller said; whereas the liquor was, in truth, some White Hermitage from the Marquis of Steyne's famous cellars, which brought fire into the Baronet's pallid cheeks and a glow into his feeble frame.

Then when he had drunk up the bottle of *petit vin blanc* she gave him her hand and took him up to the drawing-room, and made him snug on the sofa by the fire, and let him talk as she listened with the tenderest kindly interest, sitting by him, and hemming a shirt for her dear little boy. Whenever Mrs. Rawdon wished to be particularly humble and virtuous, this little shirt used to come out of her work-box. It had got to be too small for Rawdon long before it was finished.

Well, Rebecca listened to Pitt, she talked to him, she sang to him, she coaxed him, and cuddled him, so that he found himself more and more glad every day to get back from the lawyer's at Gray's Inn, to the blazing fire in Curzon Street—a gladness in which the men of law likewise participated, for Pitt's harangues were of the longest—and so that when he went away he felt quite a pang at departing. How pretty she looked kissing

her hand to him from the carriage and waving her handkerchief when he had taken his place in the mail! She put the handkerchief to her eyes once. He pulled his sealskin cap over his, as the coach drove away, and, sinking back, he thought to himself how she respected him and how he deserved it, and how Rawdon was a foolish dull fellow who didn't half appreciate his wife: and how mum and stupid his own wife was compared to that brilliant little Becky. Becky had hinted every one of these things herself, perhaps, but so delicately and gently, that you hardly knew when or where. And, before they parted, it was agreed that the house in London should be redecorated for the next season, and that the brothers' families should meet again in the country at Christmas.

"I wish you could have got a little money out of him," Rawdon said to his wife moodily when the Baronet was gone. "I should like to give something to old Raggles, hanged if I shouldn't. It ain't right, you know, that the old fellow should be kept out of all his money. It may be inconvenient, and he might let to somebody else besides us, you know."

"Tell him," said Becky, "that as soon as Sir Pitt's affairs are settled, everybody will be paid, and give him a little something on account. Here's a cheque that Pitt left for the boy," and she took from her bag and gave her husband a paper which his brother had handed over to her, on behalf of the little son and heir of the younger branch of the Crawleys.

The truth is, she had tried personally the ground on which her husband expressed a wish that she should venture—tried it ever so delicately, and found it unsafe. Even at a hint about embarrassments, Sir Pitt Crawley was off and alarmed. And he began a long speech, ex-

plaining how straitened he himself was in money matters; how the tenants would not pay; how his father's affairs, and the expenses attendant upon the demise of the old gentleman, had involved him; how he wanted to pay off incumbrances; and how the bankers and agents were overdrawn; and Pitt Crawley ended by making a compromise with his sister-in-law, and giving her a very small sum for the benefit of her little boy.

Pitt knew how poor his brother and his brother's family must be. It could not have escaped the notice of such a cool and experienced old diplomatist, that Rawdon's family had nothing to live upon, and that horses and carriages are not to be kept for nothing. He knew very well that he was the proprietor or appropriator of the money, which, according to all proper calculation, ought to have fallen to his younger brother, and he had, we may be sure, some secret pangs of remorse within him, which warned him that he ought to perform some act of justice, or, let us say, compensation, towards these disappointed relations. A just, decent man, not without brains, who said his prayers, and knew his catechism, and did his duty outwardly through life, he could not be otherwise than aware that something was due to his brother at his hands, and that morally he was Rawdon's debtor.

But, as one reads in the columns of the *Times* newspaper every now and then, queer announcements from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, acknowledging the receipt of £50 from A. B., or £10 from W. T., as conscience-money, on account of taxes due by the said A. B. or W. T., which payments the penitents beg the Right Honourable gentleman to acknowledge through the medium of the public press;—so is the Chancellor no doubt,

and the reader likewise, always perfectly sure that the above-named A. B. and W. T. are only paying a very small instalment of what they really owe, and that the man who sends up a twenty-pound note has very likely hundreds or thousands more for which he ought to account. Such, at least, are my feelings, when I see A. B. or W. T.'s insufficient acts of repentance. And I have no doubt that Pitt Crawley's contrition, or kindness if you will, towards his younger brother, by whom he had so much profited, was only a very small dividend upon the capital sum in which he was indebted to Rawdon. Not everybody is willing to pay even so much. To part with money is a sacrifice beyond almost all men endowed with a sense of order. There is scarcely any man alive who does not think himself meritorious for giving his neighbour five pounds. Thriftless gives, not from a beneficent pleasure in giving, but from a lazy delight in spending. He would not deny himself one enjoyment; not his opera-stall, not his horse, not his dinner, not even the pleasure of giving Lazarus the five pounds. Thrifty, who is good, wise, just, and owes no man a penny, turns from a beggar, haggles with a hackney-coachman, or denies a poor relation, and I doubt which is the most selfish of the two. Money has only a different value in the eyes of each.

So, in a word, Pitt Crawley thought he would do something for his brother, and then thought that he would think about it some other time.

And with regard to Becky, she was not a woman who expected too much from the generosity of her neighbours, and so was quite content with all that Pitt Crawley had done for her. She was acknowledged by the head of the family. If Pitt would not give her any-

thing, he would get something for her some day. If she got no money from her brother-in-law, she got what was as good as money,—credit. Raggles was made rather easy in his mind by the spectacle of the union between the brothers, by a small payment on the spot, and by the promise of a much larger sum speedily to be assigned to him. And Rebecca told Miss Briggs, whose Christmas dividend upon the little sum lent by her, Becky paid with an air of candid joy, and as if her exchequer was brimming over with gold—Rebecca, we say, told Miss Briggs, in strict confidence, that she had conferred with Sir Pitt, who was famous as a financier, on Briggs's special behalf, as to the most profitable investment of Miss B.'s remaining capital; that Sir Pitt, after much consideration, had thought of a most safe and advantageous way in which Briggs could lay out her money; that, being especially interested in her as an attached friend of the late Miss Crawley, and of the whole family, and that long before he left town, he had recommended that she should be ready with the money at a moment's notice, so as to purchase at the most favourable opportunity the shares which Sir Pitt had in his eye. Poor Miss Briggs was very grateful for this mark of Sir Pitt's attention—it came so unsolicited, she said, for she never should have thought of removing the money from the funds—and the delicacy enhanced the kindness of the office; and she promised to see her man of business immediately, and be ready with her little cash at the proper hour.

And this worthy woman was so grateful for the kindness of Rebecca in the matter, and for that of her generous benefactor, the Colonel, that she went out and spent a great part of her half year's dividend in the pur-

chase of a black velvet coat for little Rawdon, who, by the way, was grown almost too big for black velvet now, and was of a size and age befitting him for the assumption of the virile jacket and pantaloons.

He was a fine open-faced boy, with blue eyes and waving flaxen hair, sturdy in limb, but generous and soft in heart: fondly attaching himself to all who were good to him—to the pony—to Lord Southdown, who gave him the horse—(he used to blush and glow all over when he saw that kind young nobleman)—to the groom who had charge of the pony—to Molly, the cook, who crammed him with ghost stories at night, and with good things from the dinner—to Briggs, whom he plagued and laughed at—and to his father especially, whose attachment towards the lad was curious too to witness. Here, as he grew to be about eight years old, his attachments may be said to have ended. The beautiful mother-vision had faded away after a while. During near two years she had scarcely spoken to the child. She disliked him. He had the measles and the hooping-cough. He bored her. One day when he was standing at the landing-place, having crept down from the upper regions, attracted by the sound of his mother's voice, who was singing to Lord Steyne, the drawing-room door opening suddenly, discovered the little spy, who but a moment before had been rapt in delight, and listening to the music.

His mother came out and struck him violently a couple of boxes on the ear. He heard a laugh from the Marquis in the inner room (who was amused by this free and artless exhibition of Becky's temper), and fled down below to his friends of the kitchen, bursting in an agony of grief.

"It is not because it hurts me," little Rawdon gasped out—"only—only"—sobs and tears wound up the sentence in a storm. It was the little boy's heart that was bleeding. "Why mayn't I hear her singing? Why don't she ever sing to me—as she does to that bald-headed man with the large teeth?" He gasped out at various intervals these exclamations of rage and grief. The cook looked at the housemaid: the housemaid looked knowingly at the footman—the awful kitchen inquisition which sits in judgment in every house, and knows everything,—sate on Rebecca at that moment.

After this incident, the mother's dislike increased to hatred: the consciousness that the child was in the house was a reproach and a pain to her. His very sight annoyed her. Fear, doubt, and resistance sprang up, too, in the boy's own bosom. They were separated from that day of the boxes on the ear.

Lord Steyne also heartily disliked the boy. When they met by mischance, he made sarcastic bows or remarks to the child, or glared at him with savage-looking eyes. Rawdon used to stare him in the face, and double his little fists in return. He knew his enemy, and this gentleman, of all who came to the house, was the one who angered him most. One day the footman found him squaring his fists at Lord Steyne's hat in the hall. The footman told the circumstances as a good joke to Lord Steyne's coachman; that officer imparted it to Lord Steyne's gentleman, and to the servants' hall in general. And very soon afterwards, when Mrs. Rawdon Crawley made her appearance at Gaunt House, the porter who unbarred the gates, the servants of all uniforms in the hall, the functionaries in white waistcoats, who bawled out from landing to landing the names of

Colonel and Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, knew about her, or fancied they did. The man who brought her refreshment and stood behind her chair, had talked her character over with the large gentleman in motley-coloured clothes at his side. Bon Dieu! it is awful, that servants' inquisition! You see a woman in a great party in a splendid saloon, surrounded by faithful admirers, distributing sparkling glances, dressed to perfection, curled, rouged, smiling and happy:—Discovery walks respectfully up to her, in the shape of a huge powdered man with large calves and a tray of ices—with Calumny (which is as fatal as truth)—behind him, in the shape of the hulking fellow carrying the wafer-biscuits. Madam, your secret will be talked over by those men at their club at the public-house to-night. Jeames will tell Chawls his notions about you over their pipes and pewter beer-pots. Some people ought to have mutes for servants in Vanity Fair—mutes who could not write. If you are guilty, tremble. That fellow behind your chair may be a Janissary with a bow-string in his plush breeches pocket. If you are not guilty, have a care of appearances: which are as ruinous as guilt.

"Was Rebecca guilty or not?" the Vehmgericht of the servants' hall had pronounced against her.

And, I shame to say, she would not have got credit had they not believed her to be guilty. It was the sight of the Marquis of Steyne's carriage-lamps at her door, contemplated by Raggles, burning in the blackness of midnight, "that kep' him up," as he afterwards said; that even more than Rebecca's arts and coaxings.

And so—guiltless very likely—she was writhing and pushing onward towards what they call "a position in society," and the servants were pointing at her as lost

and ruined. So you see Molly, the housemaid, of a morning, watching a spider in the door-post lay his thread and laboriously crawl up it, until, tired of the sport, she raises her broom and sweeps away the thread and the artificer.

A day or two before Christmas, Becky, her husband and her son, made ready and went to pass the holidays at the seat of their ancestors at Queen's Crawley. Becky would have liked to leave the little brat behind, and would have done so but for Lady Jane's urgent invitations to the youngster; and the symptoms of revolt and discontent which Rawdon manifested at her neglect of her son. "He's the finest boy in England," the father said, in a tone of reproach to her, "and you don't seem to care for him, Becky, as much as you do for your spaniel. He shan't bother you much: at home he will be away from you in the nursery, and he shall go outside on the coach with me."

"Where you go yourself because you want to smoke those filthy cigars," replied Mrs. Rawdon.

"I remember when you liked 'em though," answered the husband.

Becky laughed: she was almost always good-humoured. "That was when I was on my promotion, Goosey," she said. "Take Rawdon outside with you, and give him a cigar too if you like."

Rawdon did not warm his little son for the winter's journey in this way, but he and Briggs wrapped up the child in shawls and comforters, and he was hoisted respectfully on to the roof of the coach in the dark morning, under the lamps of the White Horse Cellar: and with no small delight he watched the dawn rise, and

made his first journey to the place which his father still called home. It was a journey of infinite pleasure to the boy, to whom the incidents of the road afforded endless interest: his father answering to him all questions connected with it, and telling him who lived in the great white house to the right, and whom the park belonged to. His mother, inside the vehicle, with her maid and her furs, her wrappers, and her scent bottles, made such a to-do that you would have thought she never had been in a stage-coach before—much less, that she had been turned out of this very one to make room for a paying passenger on a certain journey performed some half-score years ago.

It was dark again when little Rawdon was wakened up to enter his uncle's carriage at Mudbury, and he sate and looked out of it wondering as the great iron gates flew open, and at the white trunks of the limes as they swept by, until they stopped, at length, before the light windows of the Hall, which were blazing and comfortable with Christmas welcome. The hall-door was flung open—a big fire was burning in the great old fire-place—a carpet was down over the chequered black flags—"It's the old Turkey one that used to be in the Ladies' Gallery," thought Rebecca, and the next instant was kissing Lady Jane.

She and Sir Pitt performed the same salute with great gravity: but Rawdon having been smoking, hung back rather from his sister-in-law, whose two children came up to their cousin: and, while Matilda held out her hand and kissed him, Pitt Binkie Southdown, the son and heir, stood aloof rather, and examined him as a little dog does a big dog.

Then the kind hostess conducted her guests to the

The arrival at Queen's Crawley

snug apartments blazing with cheerful fires. Then the young ladies came and knocked at Mrs. Rawdon's door, under the pretence that they were desirous to be useful, but in reality to have the pleasure of inspecting the contents of her band and bonnet-boxes, and her dresses which, though black, were of the newest London fashion. And they told her how much the Hall was changed for the better, and how old Lady Southdown was gone, and how Pitt was taking his station in the county, as became a Crawley in fact. Then the great dinner-bell having rung, the family assembled at dinner, at which meal Rawdon Junior was placed by his aunt, the good-natured lady of the house; Sir Pitt being uncommonly attentive to his sister-in-law at his own right hand.

Little Rawdon exhibited a fine appetite, and showed a gentleman-like behaviour.

"I like to dine here," he said to his aunt when he had completed his meal, at the conclusion of which, and after a decent grace by Sir Pitt, the younger son and heir was introduced, and was perched on a high chair by the baronet's side, while the daughter took possession of the place and the little wine-glass prepared for her near her mother. "I like to dine here," said Rawdon Minor, looking up at his relation's kind face.

"Why?" said the good Lady Jane.

"I dine in the kitchen when I am at home," replied Rawdon Minor, "or else with Briggs." But Becky was so engaged with the Baronet, her host, pouring out a flood of compliments and delights and raptures, and admiring young Pitt Binkie, whom she declared to be the most beautiful, intelligent, noble-looking little creature, and so like his father, that she did not hear the re-

CHAPTER XLV

BETWEEN HAMPSHIRE AND LONDON

SIR PITT CRAWLEY had done more than repair fences and restore dilapidated lodges on the Queen's Crawley estate. Like a wise man he had set to work to rebuild the injured popularity of his house, and stop up the gaps and ruins in which his name had been left by his disreputable and thriftless old predecessor. He was elected for the borough speedily after his father's demise; a magistrate, a member of parliament, a county magnate and representative of an ancient family, he made it his duty to show himself before the Hampshire public, subscribed handsomely to the county charities, called assiduously upon all the county folks, and laid himself out in a word to take that position in Hampshire, and in the Empire afterwards, to which he thought his prodigious talents justly entitled him. Lady Jane was instructed to be friendly with the Fuddlestons, and the Wapshots, and the other famous baronets, their neighbours. Their carriages might frequently be seen in the Queen's Crawley avenue now; they dined pretty frequently at the Hall (where the cookery was so good, that it was clear Lady Jane very seldom had a hand in it), and in return

Pitt and his wife most energetically dined out in all sorts of weather, and at all sorts of distances. For though Pitt did not care for joviality, being a frigid man of poor health and appetite, yet he considered that to be hospitable and condescending was quite incumbent on his station, and every time that he got a headache from too long an after-dinner sitting, he felt that he was a martyr to duty. He talked about crops, corn-laws, politics, with the best country gentlemen. He (who had been formerly inclined to be a sad freethinker on these points) entered into poaching and game preserving with ardour. He didn't hunt: he wasn't a hunting man: he was a man of books and peaceful habits: but he thought that the breed of horses must be kept up in the country, and that the breed of foxes must therefore be looked to, and for his part, if his friend, Sir Huddleston Fuddleston, liked to draw his country, and meet as of old the F. hounds used to do at Queen's Crawley, he should be happy to see him there, and the gentlemen of the Fuddleston hunt. And to Lady Southdown's dismay too he became more orthodox in his tendencies every day: gave up preaching in public and attending meeting-houses; went stoutly to Church: called on the Bishop, and all the Clergy at Winchester: and made no objection when the Venerable Archdeacon Trumper asked for a game of whist. What pangs must have been those of Lady Southdown, and what an utter cast-away she must have thought her son-in-law for permitting such a godless diversion! and when, on the return of the family from an oratorio at Winchester, the Baronet announced to the young ladies that he should next year very probably take them to the "county balls," they worshipped him for his kindness. Lady Jane was only

too obedient, and perhaps glad herself to go. The Dowager wrote off the direst descriptions of her daughter's worldly behaviour to the authoress of the "Washerwoman of Finchley Common" at the Cape; and her house in Brighton being about this time unoccupied, returned to that watering-place, her absence being not very much deplored by her children. We may suppose, too, that Rebecca, on paying a second visit to Queen's Crawley, did not feel particularly grieved at the absence of the lady of the medicine-chest; though she wrote a Christmas letter to her Ladyship, in which she respectfully recalled herself to Lady Southdown's recollection, spoke with gratitude of the delight which her Ladyship's conversation had given her on the former visit, dilated on the kindness with which her Ladyship had treated her in sickness, and declared that everything at Queen's Crawley reminded her of her absent friend.

A great part of the altered demeanour and popularity of Sir Pitt Crawley might have been traced to the counsels of that astute little lady of Curzon Street. "*You* remain a baronet—you consent to be a mere country gentleman," she said to him, while he had been her guest in London. "No, Sir Pitt Crawley, I know you better. I know your talents and your ambition. You fancy you hide them both: but you can conceal neither from me. I showed Lord Steyne your pamphlet on malt. He was familiar with it: and said it was in the opinion of the whole Cabinet the most masterly thing that had appeared on the subject. The Ministry has its eye upon you, and I know what you want. You want to distinguish yourself in Parliament; every one says you are the finest speaker in England (for your speeches at Oxford are still remembered). You want to be Member for

the County, where with your own vote and your borough at your back, you can command anything. And you want to be Baron Crawley of Queen's Crawley, and will be before you die. I saw it all. I could read your heart, Sir Pitt. If I had a husband who possessed your intellect as he does your name, I sometimes think I should not be unworthy of him—but—but I am your kinswoman now," she added with a laugh. "Poor little penniless I have got a little interest—and who knows, perhaps the mouse may be able to aid the lion."

Pitt Crawley was amazed and enraptured with her speech. "How that woman comprehends me!" he said. "I never could get Jane to read three pages of the malt-pamphlet. *She* has no idea that I have commanding talents or secret ambition. So they remember my speaking at Oxford, do they? The rascals! now that I represent my borough and may sit for the county, they begin to recollect me! Why, Lord Steyne cut me at the levee last year: they are beginning to find out that Pitt Crawley is some one at last. Yes, the man was always the same whom these people neglected: it was only the opportunity that was wanting, and I will show them now that I can speak and act as well as write. Achilles did not declare himself until they gave him the sword. I hold it now, and the world shall yet hear of Pitt Crawley."

Therefore it was that this roguish diplomatist had grown so hospitable; that he was so civil to oratorios and hospitals; so kind to Deans and Chapters; so generous in giving and accepting dinners; so uncommonly gracious to farmers on market-days; and so much interested about county business; and that the Christmas at the

Hall was the gayest which had been known there for many a long day.

On Christmas Day a great family gathering took place. All the Crawleys from the Rectory came to dine. Rebecca was as frank and fond of Mrs. Bute, as if the other had never been her enemy: she was affectionately interested in the dear girls, and surprised at the progress which they had made in music since her time: and insisted upon encoring one of the duets out of the great song-books which Jim, grumbling, had been forced to bring under his arm from the Rectory. Mrs. Bute, perforce, was obliged to adopt a decent demeanour towards the little adventuress—of course being free to discourse with her daughters afterwards about the absurd respect with which Sir Pitt treated his sister-in-law. But Jim, who had sate next to her at dinner, declared she was a trump: and one and all of the Rector's family agreed that the little Rawdon was a fine boy. They respected a possible baronet in the boy, between whom and the title there was only the little sickly pale Pitt Binkie.

The children were very good friends. Pitt Binkie was too little a dog for such a big dog as Rawdon to play with: and Matilda being only a girl, of course not fit companion for a young gentleman who was near eight years old, and going into jackets very soon. He took the command of this small party at once—the little girl and the little boy following him about with great reverence at such times as he condescended to sport with them. His happiness and pleasure in the country were extreme. The kitchen garden pleased him hugely, the flowers moderately, but the pigeons and the poultry, and the stables when he was allowed to visit them, were delightful objects to him. He resisted being kissed by the

Misses Crawley: but he allowed Lady Jane sometimes to embrace him: and it was by her side that he liked to sit when the signal to retire to the drawing-room being given, the ladies left the gentlemen to their claret—by her side rather than by his mother. For Rebecca seeing that tenderness was the fashion, called Rawdon to her one evening, and stooped down and kissed him in the presence of all the ladies.

He looked her full in the face after the operation, trembling and turning very red, as his wont was when moved. "You never kiss me at home, Mamma," he said; at which there was a general silence and consternation, and a by no means pleasant look in Becky's eyes.

Rawdon was fond of his sister-in-law, for her regard for his son. Lady Jane and Becky did not get on *quite* so well at this visit as on occasion of the former one, when the Colonel's wife was bent upon pleasing. Those two speeches of the child struck rather a chill. Perhaps Sir Pitt was rather too attentive to her.

But Rawdon, as became his age and size, was fonder of the society of the men than of the women; and never wearied of accompanying his sire to the stables, whither the Colonel retired to smoke his cigar—Jim, the Rector's son, sometimes joining his cousin in that and other amusements. He and the Baronet's keeper were very close friends, their mutual taste for "dawgs" bringing them much together. On one day, Mr. James, the Colonel, and Horn, the keeper, went and shot pheasants, taking little Rawdon with them. On another most blissful morning, these four gentlemen partook of the amusement of rat-hunting in a barn, than which sport Rawdon as yet had never seen anything more noble. They stopped up the ends of certain drains in the barn, into

the other openings of which ferrets were inserted; and then stood silently aloof with uplifted stakes in their hands, and an anxious little terrier (Mr. James's celebrated "dawg" Forceps, indeed,) scarcely breathing from excitement, listening motionless on three legs, to the faint squeaking of the rats below. Desperately bold at last, the persecuted animals bolted above-ground: the terrier accounted for one, the keeper for another, Rawdon, from flurry and excitement, missed his rat, but on the other hand he half-murdered a ferret.

But the greatest day of all was that on which Sir Huddleston Fuddleston's hounds met upon the lawn at Queen's Crawley.

That was a famous sight for little Rawdon. At half-past ten, Tom Moody, Sir Huddleston Fuddleston's huntsman, was seen trotting up the avenue, followed by the noble pack of hounds in a compact body—the rear being brought up by the two whips clad in stained scarlet frocks—light hard-featured lads on well-bred lean horses, possessing marvellous dexterity in casting the points of their long heavy whips at the thinnest part of any dog's skin who dares to straggle from the main body, or to take the slightest notice, or even so much as wink at the hares and rabbits starting under their noses.

Next comes boy Jack, Tom Moody's son, who weighs five stone, measures eight-and-forty inches, and will never be any bigger. He is perched on a large raw-boned hunter, half-covered by a capacious saddle. This animal is Sir Huddleston Fuddleston's favourite horse —the Nob. Other horses, ridden by other small boys, arrive from time to time, awaiting their masters, who will come cantering on anon.

Tom Moody rides up to the door of the hall, where he

is welcomed by the butler, who offers him drink, which he declines. He and his pack then draw off into a sheltered corner of the lawn, where the dogs roll on the grass, and play or growl angrily at one another, ever and anon breaking out into furious fight speedily to be quelled by Tom's voice, unmatched at rating, or the snaky thongs of the whips.

Many young gentlemen canter up on thorough-bred hacks, spatter-dashed to the knee, and enter the house to drink cherry-brandy and pay their respects to the ladies, or, more modest and sportsman-like, divest themselves of their mud-boots, exchange their hacks for their hunters, and warm their blood by a preliminary gallop round the lawn. Then they collect round the pack in the corner, and talk with Tom Moody of past sport, and the merits of Sniveller and Diamond, and of the state of the country and of the wretched breed of foxes.

Sir Huddleston presently appears mounted on a clever cob, and rides up to the Hall, where he enters and does the civil thing by the ladies, after which, being a man of few words, he proceeds to business. The hounds are drawn up to the hall-door and little Rawdon descends amongst them, excited yet half alarmed by the caresses which they bestow upon him, at the thumps he receives from their waving tails, and at their canine bickerings, scarcely restrained by Tom Moody's tongue and lash.

Meanwhile, Sir Huddleston has hoisted himself unwieldily on the Nob: "Let's try Sowster's Spinney, Tom," says the Baronet, "Farmer Mangle tells me there are two foxes in it." Tom blows his horn and trots off, followed by the pack, by the whips, by the young gents from Winchester, by the farmers of the neigh-

bourhood, by the labourers of the parish on foot, with whom the day is a great holiday; Sir Huddleston bringing up the rear with Colonel Crawley, and the whole *cortège* disappears down the avenue.

The Reverend Bute Crawley (who has been too modest to appear at the public meet before his nephew's windows), and whom Tom Moody remembers forty years back a slender divine riding the wildest horses, jumping the widest brooks, and larking over the newest gates in the country,—his Reverence, we say, happens to trot out from the Rectory Lane on his powerful black horse, just as Sir Huddleston passes; he joins the worthy baronet. Hounds and horsemen disappear, and little Rawdon remains on the door-steps, wondering and happy.

During the progress of this memorable holiday, little Rawdon, if he had got no special liking for his uncle, always awful and cold, and locked up in his study, plunged in justice-business and surrounded by bailiffs and farmers—has gained the good graces of his married and maiden aunts, of the two little folks of the Hall, and of Jim of the Rectory, whom Sir Pitt is encouraging to pay his addresses to one of the young ladies, with an understanding doubtless that he shall be presented to the living when it shall be vacated by his fox-hunting old sire. Jim has given up that sport himself, and confines himself to a little harmless duck or snipe-shooting, or a little quiet trifling with the rats during the Christmas holidays, after which he will return to the University, and try and not be plucked, once more. He has already eschewed green coats, red neckcloths, and other worldly ornaments, and is preparing himself for a change in his condition. In this cheap and thrifty way Sir Pitt tries to pay off his debt to his family.

Also before this merry Christmas was over, the Baronet had screwed up courage enough to give his brother another draft on his bankers, and for no less a sum than a hundred pounds, an act which caused Sir Pitt cruel pangs at first, but which made him glow afterwards to think himself one of the most generous of men. Rawdon and his son went away with the utmost heaviness of heart. Becky and the ladies parted with some alacrity, however: and our friend returned to London to commence those avocations with which we find her occupied when this chapter begins. Under her care the Crawley House in Great Gaunt Street was quite rejuvenescent, and ready for the reception of Sir Pitt and his family, when the Baronet came to London to attend his duties in Parliament, and to assume that position in the country for which his vast genius fitted him.

For the first session, this profound dissembler hid his projects and never opened his lips but to present a petition from Mudbury. But he attended assiduously in his place, and learned thoroughly the routine and business of the house. At home he gave himself up to the perusal of Blue Books, to the alarm and wonder of Lady Jane, who thought he was killing himself by late hours and intense application. And he made acquaintance with the ministers, and the chiefs of his party, determining to rank as one of them before many years were over.

Lady Jane's sweetness and kindness had inspired Rebecca with such a contempt for her ladyship as the little woman found no small difficulty in concealing. That sort of goodness and simplicity which Lady Jane possessed, annoyed our friend Becky, and it was impossible for her at times not to show, or to let the other divine her scorn. Her presence, too, rendered Lady Jane un-

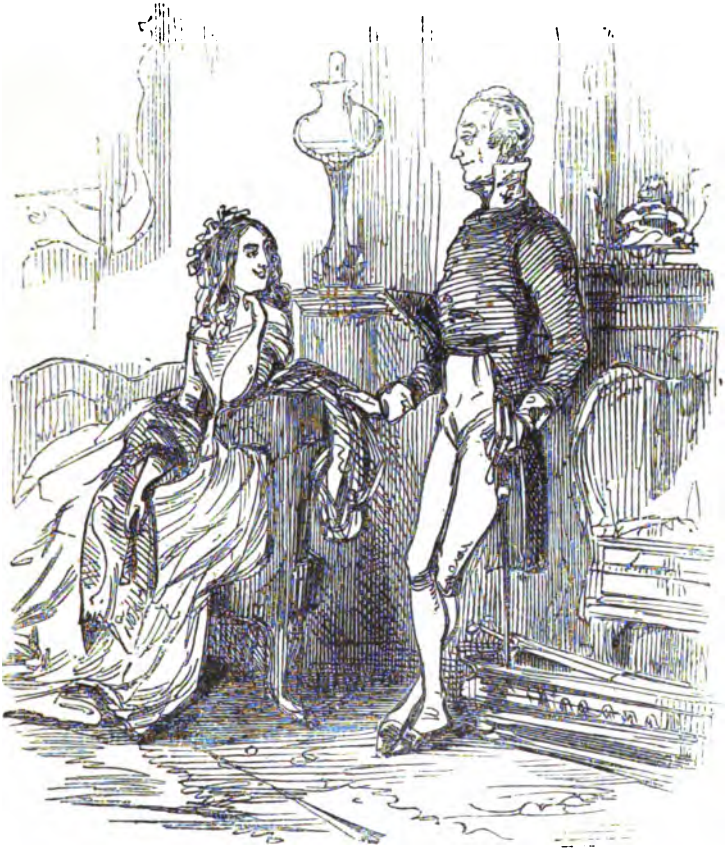
easy. Her husband talked constantly with Becky. Signs of intelligence seemed to pass between them: and Pitt spoke with her on subjects on which he never thought of discoursing with Lady Jane. The latter did not understand them to be sure, but it was mortifying to remain silent; still more mortifying to know that you had nothing to say, and hear that little audacious Mrs. Rawdon dashing on from subject to subject, with a word for every man, and a joke always pat; and to sit in one's own house alone, by the fireside, and watching all the men round your rival.

In the country, when Lady Jane was telling stories to the children, who clustered about her knees (little Rawdon into the bargain, who was very fond of her)—and Becky came into the room, sneering with green scornful eyes, poor Lady Jane grew silent under those baleful glances. Her simple little fancies shrank away tremulously, as fairies in the story-books, before a superior bad angel. She could not go on, although Rebecca, with the smallest inflection of sarcasm in her voice, besought her to continue that charming story. And on her side gentle thoughts and simple pleasures were odious to Mrs. Becky, they discorded with her; she hated people for liking them; she spurned children and children-lovers. "I have no taste for bread and butter," she would say, when caricaturing Lady Jane and her ways to my Lord Steyne.

"No more has a certain person for holy water," his lordship replied with a bow and a grin, and a great jarring laugh afterwards.

So these two ladies did not see much of each other except upon those occasions, when the younger brother's wife, having an object to gain from the other, fre-

quented her. They my-loved and my-deared each other assiduously, but kept apart generally: whereas Sir Pitt, in the midst of his multiplied avocations, found daily time to see his sister-in-law.



On the occasion of his first Speaker's dinner, Sir Pitt took the opportunity of appearing before his sister-in-law in his uniform—that old diplomatic suit which he had worn when attaché to the Pumpernickel legation.

Becky complimented him upon that dress, and ad-

mired him almost as much as his own wife and children, to whom he displayed himself before he set out. She said that it was only the thorough-bred gentleman who could wear the Court suit with advantage: it was only your men of ancient race whom the *culotte courte* became. Pitt looked down with complacency at his legs, which had not, in truth, much more symmetry or swell than the lean court sword which dangled by his side: looked down at his legs, and thought in his heart that he was killing.

When he was gone, Mrs. Becky made a caricature of his figure, which she showed to Lord Steyne when he arrived. His lordship carried off the sketch, delighted with the accuracy of the resemblance. He had done Sir Pitt Crawley the honour to meet him at Mrs. Becky's house, and had been most gracious to the new baronet and member. Pitt was struck too by the deference with which the great Peer treated his sister-in-law, by her ease and sprightliness in the conversation, and by the delight with which the other men of the party listened to her talk. Lord Steyne made no doubt but that the Baronet had only commenced his career in public life, and expected rather anxiously to hear him as an orator; as they were neighbours (for Great Gaunt Street leads into Gaunt Square, whereof Gaunt House, as everybody knows, forms one side) my lord hoped that as soon as Lady Steyne arrived in London she would have the honour of making the acquaintance of Lady Crawley. He left a card upon his neighbour in the course of a day or two; having never thought fit to notice his predecessor, though they had lived near each other for near a century past.

In the midst of these intrigues and fine parties and

wise and brilliant personages Rawdon felt himself more and more isolated every day. He was allowed to go to the club more: to dine abroad with bachelor friends: to come and go when he liked, without any questions being asked. And he and Rawdon the younger many a time would walk to Gaunt Street, and sit with the lady and the children there while Sir Pitt was closeted with Rebecca, on his way to the House, or on his return from it.

The ex-Colonel would sit for hours in his brother's house very silent, and thinking and doing as little as possible. He was glad to be employed of an errand: to go and make inquiries about a horse or a servant: or to carve the roast mutton for the dinner of the children. He was beat and cowed into laziness and submission. Delilah had imprisoned him and cut his hair off, too. The bold and reckless young blood of ten years back was subjugated, and was turned into a torpid, submissive, middle-aged, stout gentleman.

And poor Lady Jane was aware that Rebecca had captivated her husband: although she and Mrs. Rawdon my-deared and my-loved each other every day they met.

CHAPTER XLVI

STRUGGLES AND TRIALS

OUR friends at Brompton were meanwhile passing their Christmas after their fashion, and in a manner by no means too cheerful.

Out of the hundred pounds a year, which was about the amount of her income, the widow Osborne had been in the habit of giving up nearly three-fourths to her father and mother, for the expenses of herself and her little boy. With £120 more, supplied by Jos, this family of four people, attended by a single Irish servant who also did for Clapp and his wife, might manage to live in decent comfort through the year, and hold up their heads yet, and be able to give a friend a dish of tea still, after the storms and disappointments of their early life. Sedley still maintained his ascendancy over the family of Mr. Clapp, his ex-clerk. Clapp remembered the time when, sitting on the edge of the chair, he tossed off a bumper to the health of " Mrs. S——, Miss Emmy, and Mr. Joseph in India," at the merchant's rich table in Russell Square.

Time magnified the splendour of those recollections in the honest clerk's bosom. Whenever he came up from the kitchen-parlour to the drawing-room, and partook of tea or gin-and-water with Mr. Sedley, he would say, "This was not what you was accustomed to once, sir," and as gravely and reverentially drink the health of the ladies as he had done in the days of their utmost prosperity. He thought Miss 'Melia's playing the divinest music ever performed, and her the finest lady. He never would sit down before Sedley at the club even, nor would he have that gentleman's character abused by any member of the society. He had seen the first men in London shaking hands with Mr. S——; he said, "He'd known him in times when Rothschild might be seen on 'Change with him any day, and he owed him personally everythink."

Clapp, with the best of characters and hand-writings, had been able very soon after his master's disaster to find other employment for himself. "Such a little fish as me can swim in any bucket," he used to remark, and a member of the house from which old Sedley had seceded was very glad to make use of Mr. Clapp's services, and to reward them with a comfortable salary. In fine, all Sedley's wealthy friends had dropped off one by one, and this poor ex-dependent still remained faithfully attached to him.

Out of the small residue of her income, which Amelia kept back for herself, the widow had need of all the thrift and care possible in order to enable her to keep her darling boy dressed in such a manner as became George Osborne's son, and to defray the expenses of the little school to which, after much misgiving and reluctance, and many secret pangs and fears on her own part, she had been

induced to send the lad. She had sate up of nights conning lessons and spelling over crabbed grammars and geography books in order to teach them to Georgy. She had worked even at the Latin accidence, fondly hoping that she might be capable of instructing him in that language. To part with him all day: to send him out to the mercy of a schoolmaster's cane and his schoolfellows' roughness, was almost like weaning him over again, to that weak mother, so tremulous and full of sensibility. He, for his part, rushed off to the school with the utmost happiness. He was longing for the change. That childish gladness wounded his mother, who was herself so grieved to part with him. She would rather have had him more sorry, she thought: and then was deeply repentant within herself, for daring to be so selfish as to wish her own son to be unhappy.

Georgy made great progress in the school, which was kept by a friend of his mother's constant admirer, the Rev. Mr. Binny. He brought home numberless prizes and testimonials of ability. He told his mother countless stories every night about his school-companions: and what a fine fellow Lyons was, and what a sneak Sniffin was; and how Steel's father actually supplied the meat for the establishment, whereas Golding's mother came in a carriage to fetch him every Saturday; and how Neat had straps to his trowsers—might he have straps?—and how Bull Major was so strong (though only in Eutropius) that it was believed he could lick the Usher, Mr. Ward, himself. So Amelia learned to know every one of the boys in that school as well as Georgy himself: and of nights she used to help him in his exercises and puzzle her little head over his lessons as eagerly as if she was herself going in the morning into the presence of the mas-

ter. Once, after a certain combat with Master Smith, George came home to his mother with a black eye, and bragged prodigiously to his parent and his delighted old grandfather about his valour in the fight, in which, if the truth was known, he did not behave with particular heroism, and in which he decidedly had the worst. But Amelia has never forgiven that Smith to this day, though he is now a peaceful apothecary near Leicester Square.

In these quiet labours and harmless cares the gentle widow's life was passing away, a silver hair or two marking the progress of time on her head, and a line deepening ever so little on her fair forehead. She used to smile at these marks of time. "What matters it," she asked, "for an old woman like me?" All she hoped for was to live to see her son great, famous, and glorious, as he deserved to be. She kept his copy-books, his drawings, and compositions, and showed them about in her little circle, as if they were miracles of genius. She confided some of these specimens to Miss Dobbin; to show them to Miss Osborne, George's aunt, to show them to Mr. Osborne himself—to make that old man repent of his cruelty and ill-feeling towards him who was gone. All her husband's faults and foibles she had buried in the grave with him: she only remembered the lover, who had married her at all sacrifices; the noble husband so brave and beautiful, in whose arms she had hung on the morning when he had gone away to fight, and die gloriously for his king. From heaven the hero must be smiling down upon that paragon of a boy whom he had left to comfort and console her.

We have seen how one of George's grandfathers (Mr. Osborne), in his easy chair in Russell Square, daily grew more violent and moody, and how his daughter,

with her fine carriage, and her fine horses, and her name on half the public charity-lists of the town, was a lonely, miserable, persecuted old maid. She thought again and again of the beautiful little boy, her brother's son, whom she had seen. She longed to be allowed to drive in the fine carriage to the house in which he lived; and she used to look out day after day as she took her solitary drive in the Park, in hopes that she might see him. Her sister, the banker's lady, occasionally condescended to pay her old home and companion a visit in Russell Square. She brought a couple of sickly children attended by a prim nurse, and in a faint genteel giggling tone cackled to her sister about her fine acquaintance, and how her little Frederick was the image of Lord Claud Lollypop, and her sweet Maria had been noticed by the Baroness as they were driving in their donkey-chaise at Roehampton. She urged her to make her papa do something for the darlings. Frederick she had determined should go into the Guards; and if they made an elder son of him (and Mr. Bullock was positively ruining and pinching himself to death to buy land), how was the darling girl to be provided for? "I expect *you,* dear," Mrs. Bullock would say, "for of course my share of our Papa's property must go to the head of the house, you know. Dear Rhoda McMull will disengage the whole of the Castletoddy property as soon as poor dear Lord Castletoddy dies, who is quite epileptic; and little Macduff McMull will be Viscount Castletoddy. Both the Mr. Bludyers of Mincing Lane have settled their fortunes on Fanny Bludyer's little boy. My darling Frederick must positively be an eldest son; and—and do ask Papa to bring us back his account in Lombard Street, will you, dear? It doesn't look well, his going to Stumpy and Rowdy's."

After which kind of speeches, in which fashion and the main chance were blended together, and after a kiss, which was like the contact of an oyster—Mrs. Frederick Bullock would gather her starched nurslings, and simper back into her carriage.

Every visit which this leader of *ton* paid to her family was more unlucky for her. Her father paid more money into Stumpy and Rowdy's. Her patronage became more and more insufferable. The poor widow in the little cottage at Brompton, guarding her treasure there, little knew how eagerly some people coveted it.

On that night when Jane Osborne had told her father that she had seen his grandson, the old man had made her no reply: but he had shown no anger—and had bade her good night on going himself to his room in rather a kindly voice. And he must have meditated on what she said, and have made some inquiries of the Dobbin family regarding her visit; for a fortnight after it took place, he asked her where was her little French watch and chain she used to wear?

"I bought it with my money, sir," she said in a great fright.

"Go and order another like it, or a better if you can get it," said the old gentleman, and lapsed again into silence.

Of late the Misses Dobbin more than once repeated their entreaties to Amelia, to allow George to visit them. His aunt had shown her inclination; perhaps his grandfather himself, they hinted, might be disposed to be reconciled to him. Surely, Amelia could not refuse such advantageous chances for the boy. Nor could she: but she acceded to their overtures with a very heavy and suspicious heart, was always uneasy during the child's ab-

sence from her, and welcomed him back as if he was rescued out of some danger. He brought back money and toys, at which the widow looked with alarm and jealousy: she asked him always if he had seen any gentleman—" Only old Sir William, who drove him about in the four-wheeled chaise, and Mr. Dobbin, who arrived on the beautiful bay horse in the afternoon—in the green coat and pink neck-cloth, with the gold-headed whip, who promised to show him the Tower of London, and take him out with the Surrey hounds." At last, he said " There *was* an old gentleman, with thick eye-brows and a broad hat, and large chain and seals." He came one day as the coachman was lunging Georgy round the lawn on the gray pony. " He looked at me very much. He shook very much. I said ' My name is Norval ' after dinner. My aunt began to cry. She is always crying." Such was George's report on that night.

Then Amelia knew that the boy had seen his grandfather: and looked out feverishly for a proposal which she was sure would follow, and which came, in fact, in a few days afterwards. Mr. Osborne formally offered to take the boy, and make him heir to the fortune which he had intended that his father should inherit. He would make Mrs. George Osborne an allowance, such as to assure her a decent competency. If Mrs. George Osborne proposed to marry again, as Mr. O. heard was her intention, he would not withdraw that allowance. But it must be understood, that the child would live entirely with his grandfather in Russell Square, or at whatever other place Mr. O. should select; and that he would be occasionally permitted to see Mrs. George Osborne at her own residence. This message was brought or read to her in a letter one day, when her

mother was from home, and her father absent as usual, in the City.

She was never seen angry but twice or thrice in her life, and it was in one of these moods that Mr. Osborne's attorney had the fortune to behold her. She rose up trembling and flushing very much as soon as, after reading the letter, Mr. Poe handed it to her, and she tore the paper into a hundred fragments, which she trod on. "I marry again!—I take money to part from my child! Who dares insult me by proposing such a thing? Tell Mr. Osborne it is a cowardly letter, sir—a cowardly letter—I will not answer it. I wish you good morning, sir—and she bowed me out of the room like a tragedy Queen," said the lawyer who told the story.

Her parents never remarked her agitation on that day, and she never told them of the interview. They had their own affairs to interest them, affairs which deeply interested this innocent and unconscious lady. The old gentleman, her father, was always dabbling in speculation. We have seen how the Wine Company and the Coal Company had failed him. But, prowling about the City always eagerly and restlessly still, he lighted upon some other scheme, of which he thought so well that he embarked in it in spite of the remonstrances of Mr. Clapp, to whom indeed he never dared to tell how far he had engaged himself in it. And as it was always Mr. Sedley's maxim not to talk about money matters before women, they had no inkling of the misfortunes that were in store for them until the unhappy old gentleman was forced to make gradual confessions.

The bills of the little household, which had been settled weekly, first fell into arrear. The remittances had not

arrived from India, Mr. Sedley told his wife with a disturbed face. As she had paid her bills very regularly hitherto, one or two of the tradesmen to whom the poor lady was obliged to go round asking for time were very angry at a delay to which they were perfectly used from more irregular customers. Emmy's contribution, paid over cheerfully without any questions, kept the little company in half rations however. And the first six months passed away pretty easily: old Sedley still keeping up with the notion that his shares must rise and that all would be well.

No sixty pounds, however, came to help the household at the end of the half year; and it fell deeper and deeper into trouble—Mrs. Sedley, who was growing infirm and was much shaken, remained silent or wept a great deal with Mrs. Clapp in the kitchen. The butcher was particularly surly: the grocer insolent: once or twice little Georgy had grumbled about the dinners: and Amelia, who still would have been satisfied with a slice of bread for her own dinner, could not but perceive that her son was neglected, and purchased little things out of her private purse to keep the boy in health.

At last they told her, or told her such a garbled story as people in difficulties tell. One day, her own money having been received, and Amelia about to pay it over: she who had kept an account of the moneys expended by her, proposed to keep a certain portion back out of her dividend, having contracted engagements for a new suit for Georgy.

Then it came out that Jos's remittances were not paid; that the house was in difficulties, which Amelia ought to have seen before, her mother said, but she cared for nothing or nobody except Georgy. At this she

passed all her money across the table, without a word, to her mother, and returned to her room to cry her eyes out. She had a great access of sensibility too that day, when obliged to go and countermand the clothes, the darling clothes on which she had set her heart for Christmas Day, and the cut and fashion of which she had arranged in many conversations with a small milliner, her friend.

Hardest of all, she had to break the matter to Georgy, who made a loud outcry. Everybody had new clothes at Christmas. The others would laugh at him. He *would* have new clothes. She had promised them to him. The poor widow had only kisses to give him. She darned the old suit in tears. She cast about among her little ornaments to see if she could sell anything to procure the desired novelties. There was her India shawl that Dobbin had sent her. She remembered in former days going with her mother to a fine India shop on Ludgate Hill, where the ladies had all sorts of dealings and bargains in these articles. Her cheeks flushed and her eyes shone with pleasure as she thought of this resource, and she kissed away George to school in the morning, smiling brightly after him. The boy felt that there was good news in her look.

Packing up her shawl in a handkerchief, (another of the gifts of the good Major), she hid them under her cloak, and walked flushed and eager all the way to Ludgate Hill, tripping along by the Park wall, and running over the crossings, so that many a man turned as she hurried by him, and looked after her rosy pretty face. She calculated how she should spend the proceeds of her shawl: how, besides the clothes, she would buy the books that he longed for, and pay his half-year's schooling;

and how she would buy a cloak for her father instead of that old great-coat which he wore. She was not mistaken as to the value of the Major's gift. It was a very fine and beautiful web: and the merchant made a very good bargain when he gave her twenty guineas for her shawl.

She ran on amazed and flurried with her riches to Darton's shop in St. Paul's Churchyard, and there purchased the "Parents' Assistant," and the "Sandford and Merton" Georgy longed for, and got into the coach there with her parcel, and went home exulting. And she pleased herself by writing in the fly-leaf in her neatest little hand, "George Osborne, A Christmas gift from his affectionate mother." The books are extant to this day, with the fair delicate superscription.

She was going from her own room with the books in her hand to place them on George's table, where he might find them on his return from school; when in the passage, she and her mother met. The gilt bindings of the seven handsome little volumes caught the old lady's eye.

"What are those?" she said.

"Some books for Georgy," Amelia replied—"I—I promised them to him at Christmas."

"Books!" cried the elder lady, indignantly—"Books, when the whole house wants bread! Books, when to keep you and your son in luxury, and your dear father out of gaol, I've sold every trinket I had, the India shawl from my back—even down to the very spoons, that our tradesmen mightn't insult us, and that Mr. Clapp, which indeed he is justly entitled, being not a hard landlord, and a civil man, and a father, might have his rent. O Amelia! you break my heart with your books and that boy of yours, whom you are ruining, though part with

him you will not. O Amelia, may God send you a more dutiful child than I have had! There's Jos deserts his father in his old age: and there's George, who might be provided for, and who might be rich, going to school like a lord, with a gold watch and chain round his neck—while my dear, dear old man is without a sh—shilling." Hysteric sobs and cries ended Mrs. Sedley's speech—it echoed through every room in the small house, whereof the other female inmates heard every word of the colloquy.

"O mother, mother!" cried poor Amelia in reply. "You told me nothing—I—I promised him the books. I—I only sold my shawl this morning. Take the money—take everything"—and with quivering hands she took out her silver, and her sovereigns—her precious golden sovereigns, which she thrust into the hands of her mother, whence they overflowed and tumbled, rolling down the stairs.

And then she went into her room, and sank down in despair and utter misery. She saw it all now. Her selfishness was sacrificing the boy. But for her he might have wealth, station, education, and his father's place, which the elder George had forfeited for her sake. She had but to speak the words, and her father was restored to competency: and the boy raised to fortune. O what a conviction it was to that tender and stricken heart!

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